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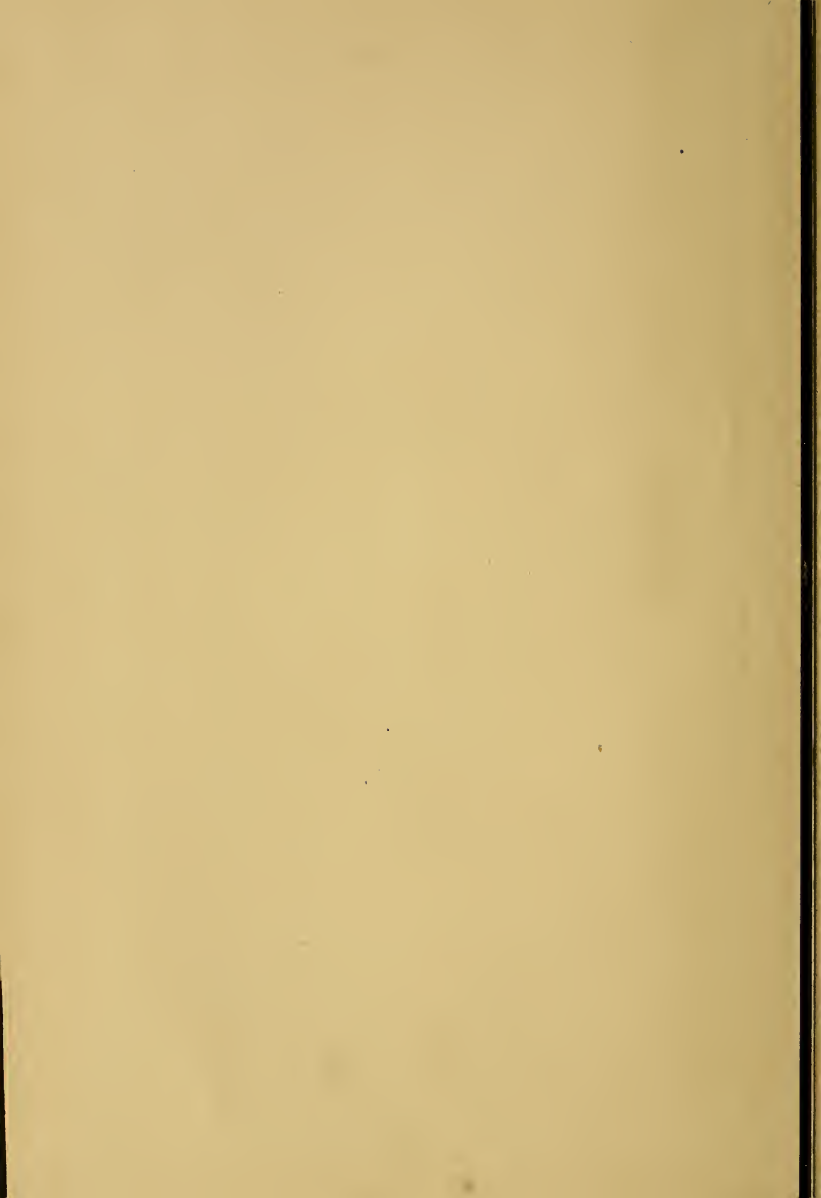
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# The King's Cupbearer

Agnes Chalmers





# THE KING'S CUPBEARER

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*AN HISTORICAL, MORALITY PLAY*

IN TWELVE CANTICLES

BY

AGNES CHALMERS

Published by  
THE CRESCENT PUBLISHERS,  
Grand Rapids, Michigan.  
U. S. A.

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

SEP 26 1919

PS3505  
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*This book is offered as an American's expression of gratitude to the King of Great Britain and Ireland and his valiant armies through whose unselfed service Jerusalem was restored December 9, 1917, to the civilized world.*



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*AN EXPLANATION OF THE WRITING  
OF THIS PLAY*

THE POET AND HIS SONGS

As the birds come in Spring  
We know not from where;  
As the stars come at evening  
From depths of the air;

As the rain comes from the cloud  
And the brook from the ground  
As suddenly, low or loud,  
Out of silence a sound;

As the grapes come to the vine  
The fruit to the tree;  
As the wind comes to the pine  
And the tide to the sea;

As comes the white sails of ships  
O'er the ocean's verge;  
As comes the smile to the lips,  
The foam to the surge;

So come to the Poet his songs,  
All hitherward blown  
From the misty realm that belongs  
To the vast unknown.

\* \* \* \* \*

For voices pursue him by day  
And haunt him by night,  
And he listens and needs must obey,  
When the Angel says: "Write!"

—*Longfellow.*

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## INTRODUCTION

THIS play is designed to give to the world a simple lesson in honest building. No more appropriate words of introduction could be offered than Montaigne has given in describing the value of the honest motive which should accompany all constructive work. " 'Tis an exact life," writes Montaigne, "that maintains itself in due order in private. Every one may juggle his part, and represent an honest man upon the stage; but within, and in his own bosom, where all may do as they list, where all is concealed, to be regular—there's the point. The next degree is to be so in his house, and in his ordinary actions, for which we are accountable to none, and where there is no study nor artifice. And therefore Bias, setting forth the excellent state of a private family, says: 'of which the master is the same within, by his own virtue and temper, that he is abroad, for fear of the laws and report of men.' And it was a worthy saying of Julius Drusus, to the masons who offered him for three

thousand crowns to put his house in such a posture that his neighbors should no longer have the same inspection into it as before: 'I will give you,' said he, 'six thousand to make it so that everybody may see into every room.' "

If this play furnishes an opportunity to look more closely into our dwellings, and if, even in a degree, it enables "everybody" to "see into every room," "The King's Cup-bearer" shall thus have aided—somewhat—in the ultimate liberation of the human race.

AGNES CHALMERS

Grand Rapids, Michigan.  
Thanksgiving, 1916.

## THE CAST

### CANTICLE I

*(In the order of their appearance)*

HANANI, *brother of Nehemiah*

MESSENGER

SECOND MESSENGER

NEHEMIAH, *the King's cupbearer*

ARTAXERXES, *King of Babylon*

*(Military Aid)*

SIGHT—*Intuition*

TOUCH—*Gratitude*

TASTE—*Patience*

SMELL—*Charity*

HEARING—*Wakefulness*

### CANTICLE II

*(Previous Characters)*

### CANTICLE III

ELIASHIB, *the High Priest*

SEVERAL PRIESTS

MEN OF JERICH0

ZACCUR

SONS OF HASSENAAH

MEREMOTH, MESHULLAM, *and* ZADOK

SEVERAL TEKOITES

JEHOIADA *and* MESHULLAM

MELATIAH *and* JABON

UZZIEL *and* HARANIAH

REPAIAH, JEDAIAH, *and* HATTUSH

## THE CAST (continued)

MALCHIJAH *and* HASHUB

SHALLUM

DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM

HANUN

MALCHIAH

REHUM, HASHABIAH, BAVIA, *and* EZER

BARUCH

MEREMOTH

BENJAMIN *and* HASHUB

BINNUI *and* PALAL

THE NETHINIMS *and* TEKAITES

PRIESTS

ZADOK *and* SHEMAIAH

HANANIAH, HANUM, *and* MESHULLAM

GOLDSMITHS *and* MERCHANTS

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

## CANTICLE IV

SANBALLAT

FIRST MESSENGER

SENSUALITY

GESHEM

SECOND MESSENGER

SHAME

SLEEP



## THE CAST (continued)

### CANTICLE V

*(Previous Characters)*

### CANTICLE VI

GROUPS OF JEWS

SHEMAIAH

WIFE OF SHEMAIAH

HASHUB

BINNUI

*Previous Characters*

### CANTICLE VII

PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENT

HUMAN RECOGNITION

SHIFTLESSNESS

SELF-PITY

HUMAN WILL

PERSONALITY

EASE

JEALOUSY

IDOLATRY

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

HURRY

PERSECUTION

ENEMY

LOVE OF MONEY

### CANTICLE VIII

HUMAN BIRTH

MATURITY

## THE CAST (continued)

DISCOURAGEMENT

DEATH

DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

### CANTICLE IX

IMPS

EZRA, *the Scribe*

TOBIAH

*Previous Characters*

### CANTICLE X

*(Previous Characters).*

NEW CUPBEARER

### CANTICLES XI AND XII

*(Previous Characters)*

## THE KING'S CUPBEARER

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

The word, Nehemiah, is derived from the Hebrew, nek-hem-yaw, meaning "comforted of God." The word, Jerusalem, is from the Hebrew, yer-oo-shaw-lame, meaning founded peacefully, or, habitation of peace. "To be safe in mind, body and estate," one authority adds in defining Jerusalem.

Nehemiah, the Jewish patriot, was Cup-bearer in the royal palace of Shushan during the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. During Nehemiah's term of service in the Persian Court, word came of the unfortunate condition of the children of Israel, the remnant, or returned colony, who dwelt unprotected in the unfortified city of Jerusalem. In this connection, it is of interest to recall that in the year 588 B. C., Nebuzaradan, a lieutenant under Nebuchadnezzar, razed to the ground the city of Jerusalem, its Temple and protecting walls. Moses had earlier predicted that, if in the land of their captivity the children of Israel repented of their evil,

the Holy City would again be restored to them and that they would then be able to rejoice in peace and safety within the protection of its rebuilt fortifications.

Nehemiah's sincere concern for the welfare of the captive Jews within the devastated "City of David" led him earnestly to request the King to give him a commission to go to Jerusalem and repair the demolished walls of the city. Having obtained this royal commission, the King's Cupbearer left the Persian Court, accompanied by a military escort, and reached Jerusalem B. C. 444, remaining there until B. C. 432.

During the first fifty-two days of the Prince's sojourn in Jerusalem, he rebuilt the city's wall, and although he was beset on all sides with discouragements and doubts, he faithfully continued his work until the fortifications were finished. During the process of the work on the walls, Nehemiah was persecuted unceasingly by the jealous governors of Samaria and the Plain region, Sanballat and Geshem and their accomplice, Tobiah. In order to defeat the purpose of his scheming enemies, Nehemiah set a watch "against them day and night." He supplied his workers with both tools and weapons so that they might work with one hand and

with the other fight against the foe.

This earnest Prince not only bore the mockery and abuse of those outside of the city but he likewise endured the condemnation of his own workmen who rebelled against the heavy tithes and cruel oppression of their rulers and nobles.

After the completion of the wall, the people joyously realized that they truly understood for the first time the Law, when they heard the Bible read by Ezra, the Scribe.

Although a solemn covenant had been made to "walk in God's law" by observing brotherly love, supporting the Temple, and avoiding inter-marriages with the heathen, after Nehemiah was called back to Babylon, all of these sacred vows were broken. In this connection it is interesting to note that historians give two views of this absence of Nehemiah from Jerusalem. Some writers are of the opinion that Nehemiah was called back to Babylon for punishment because of the accusatory letters Sanballat and Geshem sent to Artaxerxes regarding the Cupbearer's desire, or ambition, rather, to become King of Jerusalem. Some writers are of the opinion that Nehemiah returned to the Persian Court in fulfillment of the promise he gave before

leaving Jerusalem. The view is here taken that Nehemiah was punished as a convict slave, doomed to hard labor in the quarries of Persia during his nine years' absence at the Court of Artaxerxes.

The Smith-Peloubet Dictionary of the Bible states that "various stratagems" were "resorted to to get Nehemiah away from Jerusalem, and if possible to take his life; but that which most nearly succeeded was the attempt to bring him into suspicion with the king of Persia, as if he intended to set himself up as an independent king as soon as the walls were completed. The artful letter of Sanballat so far wrought upon Artaxerxes that he issued a decree stopping the work till further orders."

After a nine years' sojourn at the Court of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah again returned to Jerusalem. He vigorously ejected Eliashib and Tobiah from the Temple because of their attempt personally to own the Church which is destined to serve impersonally all mankind. This royal Cupbearer enforced the separation of the mixed tribes from Israel, arranged for the reward of the singers and the Levites who had actually performed the work of reconstruction, and made provision for the

perpetual care and support of the Temple.

In all these ways, Nehemiah, "The King's Cupbearer," acted much as all others act to-day whose desire is to build rather than to destroy. He knew that the practical and the ideal, the male and the female, must be forever united in the individual consciousness.

Possibly history will not bear out the license taken when the daughters of Shallum are made to appear as actual workers on the walls of Jerusalem. The appearance of the daughters of Shallum as builders; and the five women, representing Intuition, Gratitude, Patience, Charity, and Wakefulness coincides with the tender womanly traits "The King's Cupbearer" manifested in all the loving, motherly care he showed at all times for the welfare of the children of Israel. In his consistent desire to rebuild the waste walls of Jerusalem, and thus safeguard the remnant of the house of Israel, Nehemiah was, in reality, re-establishing for all time that quality of thought which Bernard Shaw designates as "an eternal womanly principle in the universe." Nehemiah's fearless denunciation of crafty malice in his fight against the governors of the Plain shows forth the courageous masculine traits of this Prince's noble character. Nehemiah fully



realized that strength and courage, patience and intuition must be truly manifested by one who would become an honest, constructive builder, and therefore stood earnestly by his work day by day.

NOTE: *"The Popular and Critical Bible Encyclopedia"* states — "We should naturally have expected the names of great religious teachers like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc., to be associated with some of the Psalms, and the fact that such is not the case tends to show that these hymns were either composed by members of the guilds of temple singers for the worship in the second temple, or that they were gathered by these priestly musicians after coming to expression here and there among the people."

*In quoting the Psalms in this play, it is with the thought that possibly some of these constructive songs of gratitude came into being when the waste walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt as a protection to the city and its temple.*



No more fitting tribute was ever given than that which history has recorded of Nehemiah, "The King's Cupbearer:" "His character seems almost without a blemish."



## PROLOGUE

DESCRIPTION: *Two Prologue speakers, SIGHT and INTUITION, appear before a curtain which portrays two parallel paths winding up a mountain side. One path is the way of human experience, the other typifies the way of spiritual discernment. The one path is beset with obstacles; the other winds upward without obstruction. Both paths converge in the distance. (The Prologue is spoken by SIGHT, a man; and by INTUITION, a woman.)*

### SIGHT

My friends, you know him well, this man of  
good  
Who speaks to you tonight. Across the way,  
Perchance he dwells from you. Earth's  
brotherhood  
Comprises such as he. Yea, day by day,  
You meet him in the street,—the man who  
goes

About his daily toil with hope and cheer,  
A loving worker, he who always knows  
The joy of building rightly in his task,—  
This is "The King's Cupbearer." None may  
ask

To know a nobler one than he who serves  
Mankind with just the duty of each hour.—  
This is "The King's Cupbearer" who deserves  
The merit Love bestows. Truth's strength  
and pow'r

Be with each royal Cupbearer we meet,  
And pass to-day, upon life's surging street.

#### INTUITION

We may be King's Cupbearer,  
As we go on our way,  
Serving the wine of heav'n,  
Loving all faithfully.  
The cup Love gives is patience;  
The wine, Truth understood.  
The King is Our God in heav'n,  
Guarding earth's brotherhood.  
Jerusalem is knowing  
Man is nor bond, nor free;  
Blest City, ever sowing  
Seeds of true liberty.  
The wall we build is patience,  
Protecting men from wrong.  
The temple, Church about us;  
Love's anthem,—work and song.

The new birth comes through proving  
Man is complete to-day.  
Watching and ever loving  
Lead to eternal day.  
Sanballat is sin's malice,  
The curse of peace and good;  
Geshem, hate's poison chalice,  
Drugging all those who stood  
Bravely through storm and sunlight,  
Ever through peace and war,  
Staunchly at dawn or midnight,  
Casting sin's curse afar;  
But ever God in heav'n  
Destroys the hand of fear,  
He who would stand is giv'n  
Strength to endure and bear.  
Dear Friends, may we be watchful  
To aid all on our way,—  
To build and to destroy not,  
Blest King, we watch and pray.

*(SIGHT and INTUITION turn and walk some distance together. They finally separate, each to take a different path. SIGHT takes the rough path of human experience; INTUITION, the clear way of spiritual discernment. In the dim distance, it may be seen that these two paths converge.)*



## CANTICLE I

### REPENTANCE, DOUBT AND RESOLVE

**DESCRIPTION:** *The scene is a richly appointed room in Shushan, the palace, at the Persian Court of KING ARTAXERXES, in the year 445 B. C. The hangings of the room are of white, green, and blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble. The several beds in the spacious room are draped in gold and silver. The floor is a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble.*

**DISCOVERED:** *When the curtain divides, several messengers are discovered standing in the center of the room talking to HANANI. They are engaged in earnest discussion.*

HANANI

*(sadly)*

There is no hope; the city desolate  
Now stands.

MESSENGER

Doth not one heed its direful fate?

HANANI

*(wearily)*

No one repairs the city's shattered walls!

SECOND MESSENGER

Is no one mindful lest its fortress falls?

HANANI

The world has not awakened yet to see

There is nor Greek, nor Gentile, bond nor  
free.

THIRD MESSENGER

Jerusalem is lost, yea, cast aside!

HANANI

*(despairingly)*

The city which hath been adorned, the bride  
Of Life eternal!

*(As these words are spoken, a stream of  
moonlight floods the room. NEHEMIAH  
is heard praying outside. The words are  
distinctly heard, although the speaker is  
not seen.)*

NEHEMIAH'S WORDS

"I beseech thee, O Lord God of heaven,  
That keepeth covenant and mercy  
For them that love him and observe his com-  
mandments;  
Let thine ear now be attentive,  
And thine eyes open,



That thou mayest hear the prayer of thy  
servant,

Which I pray before thee now, day and night,  
For the children of Israel, thy servants,

And confess the sins of the children of Israel

Which we have sinned against thee; both I

*(The curtains at rear part, and NEHEMIAH*

*slowly enters. He is a very tall, dark man,*

*wearing heavy black beard, without mus-*

*tache. He is dressed in the robes of a*

*royal cupbearer, olive green satin gar-*

*ment with conventional design of em-*

*broidery, and a wide shoulder sash of*

*royal purple.)*

And my fathers house have sinned."

(Nehemiah I: 5, 6.)

NEHEMIAH

*(earnestly addressing HANANI)*

The Jews which have escaped, tell me, I pray,

If they, left of captivity, are safe?

HANANI

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

They are in dire affliction, day by day,—

In great reproach; the walls are broken  
down;

Jerusalem in hazard stands; its gates

Are burning.

NEHEMIAH

*(sitting down and weeping—to himself)*

Before the God of heaven, grant my renown  
May come, alone, through building up these  
walls.

Yea, every other task of mine must wait.

(KING ARTAXERXES *and the QUEEN enter, followed by a train of courtiers.*)

(*The KING and QUEEN ascend a miniature throne*)

THE KING

Were it not pity, Cupbearer, that thou  
Shouldst seek to go about this thankless  
task?

The captives in Jerusalem art now  
Endangered.

If any grievous plague hath heav'n  
Through centuries it hath been freely giv'n  
To waste Jerusalem.

(NEHEMIAH *bows his head. He makes no answer. The KING summons messengers and gives orders for a seven-day feast. Enter several messengers who offer all drink in various shaped vessels of gold. Royal wine is served in abundance. NEHEMIAH approaches the KING'S throne and silently kneels. He then arises and leaves the stage, L. During the festivities of wine drinking, in which all join save the KING and QUEEN, NEHEMIAH again enters, bearing two jewelled cups of wine,*

*brimming full. He presents these to the  
KING and QUEEN.)*

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

Thou art not sick

Answer me, is this but sorrow of thine heart?

NEHEMIAH

*(kneeling and kissing KING'S hand)*

O, King, live thou forever:

*(sadly)*

If I had

The gift of tongues, I might then tell to thee

The plight of those who in captivity

Now wait within Jerusalem. The place

Of all my fathers' sepulchres lies waste;

The very gates are now consumed with fire.

THE KING

*(according NEHEMIAH permission to arise,*

*NEHEMIAH stands before the KING)*

For what doth thou then make request?

NEHEMIAH

*(with hand uplifted, addressing the KING)*

Higher

Than heav'n, let this, my prayer, ascend.

I pray thee, King,

Send me, that I may wisely build and mend

Those broken walls.

*(The KING turns and addresses the QUEEN,  
who is seated beside him on the raised  
dias.)*

THE KING  
(questioningly)

How long his absence, Queen? When shall  
we sing

Of his return?

(Both KING and QUEEN drain to the dregs  
the cups NEHEMIAH has brought. They  
return the empty cups to the Cupbearer,  
who places them on table, R. NEHEMIAH  
again stands before the KING and  
QUEEN.)

THE QUEEN  
(to the KING)

We shall not miss him

(kindly glancing toward NEHEMIAH)

if he can rebuild

Those walls that lieth desolate. Stilled

Shall our sorrow be till he return.

NEHEMIAH

(Stepping forward and kissing the hands of  
the KING and QUEEN, as he kneels before  
them)

I set a time to come; it shall be when

The waste walls of my thought are built.

Yea, then

I shall return. Forget not that I go

Forth but to struggle with one deadly foe—

Destructive self—the self that rends, indeed,

All else save its own whims.

King, I may need letters to governors.

(KING gives NEHEMIAH permission to arise.

*As NEHEMIAH rises, the KING hastily whispers directions to scribes regarding letters. The scribes withdraw to one side and take from drawer documents which they present to the KING.)*

THE KING

*(receiving the papers and handing them to the QUEEN)*

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

My son, go forth,

And prove to all the world the mighty worth  
Of building rightly.

THE QUEEN

God bless these messages, and grant the way  
Is opened through each word to higher way  
Of peace.

*(hands letters to the KING)*

THE KING

*(Beckoning to five men in military garb, who are waiting quietly at one side. The men approach the KING, give military salute, and kneel.)*

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

I summon officers to go with thee,—  
This military aid

*(pointing to men and giving them the signal to arise. They all arise.)*

God grant they be  
Faithful to service, willing to obey,  
And ever watchful lest thou fall'st the prey  
Of foe.

SIGHT

*(Stepping forward and warmly shaking  
hands with NEHEMIAH, peering into his  
face and looking everywhere about.)*  
Ah, look! My name is Sight. I'll try  
To see for thee.

HEARING

*(listening—to NEHEMIAH)*  
Hark! I am Hearing. I  
Will hear for thee.

TOUCH

*(touching everything and bowing  
—to NEHEMIAH)*  
My name is Touch. I do  
Discern all things.

TASTE

*(tasting wine, proudly—to NEHEMIAH)*  
My name is Taste. I, too,  
Teach thee discernment and delight,—a taste  
Of better things.

SMELL

*(sniffing the air—to NEHEMIAH)*  
My name is Smell.  
*(with importance)*

I waste

All time on niceties.

NEHEMIAH

*(sizing up the men, disapprovingly)*

Are these, my King,

The best thou hast?

THE KING

*(to NEHEMIAH, eager to explain)*

They are trained.

NEHEMIAH

*(disapprovingly—to KING)*

I would fling

Their training all aside if I might be

Protected by my better self.

THE KING

*(regarding the five men sadly*

*—to NEHEMIAH)*

I know

*(shaking his head)*

Just what thou fear'st, and, yet, no earthly  
foe

Is conquered without them.

NEHEMIAH

*(as if he would reject the aid of the men)*

And, yet, to me

These soldiers stand for trained hypocrisy.

*(NEHEMIAH draws back from the five men  
who crowd about him. They endeavor to  
stand as his body guard.)*

No conquest save the conquest over each  
And every one of them!

*(sadly regarding the five men)*

No vict'ry won  
Save by self's transformation!

*(to the five men)*

Friends, to reach  
My better self, I must discard, indeed.  
All that thou cherisheth.

THE KING

*(in a quandary—to himself)*

I am perplexed!

THE QUEEN

*(eagerly, to KING)*

King, grant that I may say  
One word of peace.

*(indicating the five men)*

These men in higher form  
Have oft appeared to keep our Court from  
harm.

*(to NEHEMIAH, with deep conviction)*

They can protect thee; if thou wouldst but  
see

Their true selves, they will help to set thee  
free.

NEHEMIAH

*(to KING and QUEEN)*

If they

*(indicating five men)*



have higher form, blest Queen and King,  
I trust them, then, to guard from suffering  
Thy servant.

*(bowing and indicating himself)*

SIGHT

*(proudly, to NEHEMIAH)*

I have been trained everywhere  
To gain my present worth. I go, my friend,  
With thee.

NEHEMIAH

*(again shrinking back from the five men as  
if he could not go with them—to SIGHT)*

Thou speakest proudly, Sir, I dare  
Not enter with thee in this task I do.

SIGHT

*(eagerly to NEHEMIAH)*

If I should reach a greater height, renew  
My better self, wouldst thou then go with  
me?

NEHEMIAH

*(to SIGHT)*

Assured, indeed, that I could never see  
Aught but the real through thee, I, then,  
shouldst go  
With thee, Sir Sight, to conquer alien foe.

SIGHT

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

Then I shall stay with thee, for thou may'st  
need

My presence as thou conquer'st form and  
creed.

HEARING

*(stepping forward, convincingly  
—to NEHEMIAH)*

Have I not heard for thee in days long past?

NEHEMIAH

*(peering long into HEARING'S face, as if recognizing an undesirable acquaintance)*

Yea, oft'times heard; I've oft'times wished  
thou had'st

Not heard

*(covering his ears with his hands as if to  
shut out unpleasant sounds)*

The jarring noises of the fast  
Revolving centuries!

*(as if brushing all noise aside)*

Would, I might cast  
Their shrieking woes aside!

*(weeps)*

HEARING

*(pleadingly, to NEHEMIAH)*

Friend, truly, I  
Will stand for perfect hearing; I will try  
To put down self.

NEHEMIAH

*(testingly—to HEARING)*

Nor hear of foe nor friend  
Aught but the best?

(HEARING *nods assent*)

Then, come!

TOUCH

(*stepping forward and addressing* NEHEMIAH)

I, too, wouldst lend  
Thee faithful service.

NEHEMIAH

(*to TOUCH*)

Yea, I know that thou  
Hast wrought good oft'times, yet thy judgments now  
Are biased.

TOUCH

(*proudly, to NEHEMIAH*)

I, friend, am trained to serve. Trust me!

SMELL

(*advancing and addressing NEHEMIAH*)  
And I will warn thee when thou need'st to be  
On guard

TASTE

(*hastily, to NEHEMIAH*)

I gladly tell thee what is good.

NEHEMIAH

(*looking at the five men, sadly*)  
And yet, not one of you have understood!

ALL

(*incredulously*)

Not one of us has understood?

*(to the five men)*

Not one

Was ever credited with vict'ry won,—  
Not in thy present forms. 'Tis very true  
Thou art well trained to serve; yea, there  
are few

Thine equals! Still, thou art so incomplete  
I dare not go with thee!

*(drawing back)*

I dare not meet

—With just thine aid, alone,—I dare not go—  
With thee alone—to conquer self, the foe  
That doth resist the longest.

*(loudly)*

Men, awake

Thy better selves.

THE KING

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

Our Queen says they have better selves.

*(indicating men)*

I know

She truly speaks; thou may'st safely go  
With these five, well-trained men.

THE QUEEN

*(indicating men)*

They always take

On higher forms whenever the command  
Is giv'n.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

We offer as a pledge our hand,

*(all extend hand to NEHEMIAH)*

In honor; if thou need'st us,

Thou shalt see

We will be present, friend, to set thee free  
From self.

NEHEMIAH

*(to five men)*

Dear friends, I trust thee as we go

Forth to redeem all captives from the foe  
Of self.

*(instructing the men)*

Mark, God's own word each man must speak!  
Remember well, the fall'n and the weak  
Look up in pray'r to us. God grant we may  
Judge righteous judgment.

*(with bowed head)*

Let us watch and pray

For wisdom.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

Let us ever faithful be!

NEHEMIAH

*(to all)*

'Til Israel's remnant shall be truly free.

*(to the five)*

Speak up, my men, and tell me, dost thou

know  
That good must aid us daily as we go  
Forth to our tasks?

(*to KING and QUEEN*)

I go, blest King and Queen,  
With these,

(*indicating men*)

thy messengers. Grant they redeem  
My self from sin and fear until I see  
I am nor Greek, nor Gentile, bond nor free,  
Nor male, nor female, in the task I do.

(*joyously*)

We shall redeem the remnant. Captive Jew  
Shall be set free! Now I may go, indeed,

(*gathering men closely to him*)

with these.

Our Father knows our every need.

THE KING

(*handing the letters to NEHEMIAH*)

Go forth, thou Cupbearer of earthly King,  
Go forth, and let the world in gladness ring  
With all thine overcomings.

May these

(*indicating letters*)

Bring thee peace.

NEHEMIAH

(*with firm resolve*)

The city of my fathers' sepulchres must be  
rebuilt!

It oft'times seems a struggle to begin  
To cleanse one's thought from cursed fear  
and sin.

I long to go, and yet,

*(as if weakening in his resolve)*

I am afraid.

*(with firmness)*

Ah, no, God hath made all things that were  
made,

And called them "good" and "very good."

Blest King,

I go

*(resolutely)*

to conquer sin and suffering.

*(NEHEMIAH steps forward and kneels a moment before the KING and QUEEN for a blessing.)*

THE KING AND QUEEN

*(together to NEHEMIAH)*

Our blessing, Son, the Court of Persia gives  
Thee full commission. Go! Earth's captive  
lives!

*(KING and QUEEN give command for  
NEHEMIAH to rise)*

NEHEMIAH

*(Rising, to All as if in prayer, with hands  
outstretched. The five men stand close  
to NEHEMIAH while the KING and QUEEN  
and Court listen with bowed heads.)*

“O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear  
Be attentive to the pray’r of thy servant,  
And to the pray’r of thy servants who desire  
To fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee,  
Thy servant this day, and grant him mercy  
In the sight of this man;

*(indicating KING)*

For I was ‘The King’s Cupbearer.’ ”

*(Nehemiah 1:11.)*



## CANTICLE II

### THE TRANSFIGURATION OF ENCOURAGEMENT

**DESCRIPTION:** *The scene shows the moon, under a half cloud, shedding light upon the waste walls of Jerusalem. The scene is laid in a valley. The dragon well is near and the dung port. A brook runs close by. A most disconsolate aspect. The gates of the wall have all been consumed with fire.*

**DISCOVERED:** *NEHEMIAH and the five men, SIGHT, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, HEARING, are standing together, viewing with cheerful countenances the most disconsolate of places, —Jerusalem's devastated walls. They walk together, as if on a tour of inspection, until they come to the gate of the fountain and the King's pool. A beast passes under this gate.*

NEHEMIAH

(*to SIGHT*)

"Ye see the distress that we are in,  
How Jerusalem lieth waste,  
And the gates thereof are burned with fire;  
Come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusa-  
lem,

That we be no more a reproach."

(Nehemiah 2:17.)

E'en through this dire distress, I seem to be  
Encouraged to press on and set men free.

SIGHT

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

The hand of God hath dealt so well with thee.  
The King's words bless us. With sincerity  
We go about this task.

NEHEMIAH

(*to the five men*)

Come, let us rise  
And build these walls aright.

TOUCH

(*joyously, to NEHEMIAH*)

Let us surprise  
The rulers, priests, and nobles with a wall  
That never can be shattered, never fall.

TASTE

(*to all*)

We are despised, yea, laughed to scorn, and,  
yet,

We, too, may build what multitudes forget  
Not, nor despise.

SMELL

Let us build high—  
High unto heav'n, that he who passeth by  
May mark the remnant now is safe, indeed,  
Within these walls.

HEARING

Where never form, nor creed  
May enter.

NEHEMIAH

*(approvingly to all)*

Thou hast grown wise, my friends; yea,  
thou dost speak  
Words of true wisdom. All the lonely, weak  
And weary ones of earth shall be redeemed.  
Thou art much nobler than thou e'er hast  
seemed.

I say again, thou hast grown wise; and high  
Above thy former selves.

SIGHT

*(meekly, to NEHEMIAH)*

And, if we try  
We may grow higher in this thing we do.

HEARING

We may put off the old man for the new.

NEHEMIAH

*(to all)*

My men, I see a change in thee.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

'Tis true!

NEHEMIAH

*(to all)*

My friends, I doubted thee, but now I see  
Thou, trained in things of God, may set men  
free  
From self.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

'Tis true, we, trained in things of good,  
Free thee and all earth's weary brotherhood.

NEHEMIAH

Then I must trust thy better selves, indeed,  
In all this reconstruction. Friends, we need  
To stand together.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

Friend, nor lust, nor greed  
Shall turn us back.

NEHEMIAH

*(to all)*

These broken walls shall be  
Redeemed—this is God's work for thee and  
me;  
And, as we work, God's truth shall bring to  
light  
Our better selves.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

God give us grace and might!

NEHEMIAH

*(with hands outstretched—to the five)*

Remember well, ye men, that which I say  
The God in heav'n always points the way  
Of him who builds for others.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

He doeth well!

NEHEMIAH

*(to all)*

And yet he may not ever boast nor tell  
Of what he builds. Ye have no portion, right,  
Within Jerusalem. No fearful right  
Of ownership may enter in thy work.  
Come, let us build.

THE FIVE MEN

*(together)*

Let not one of us shirk

Our duty.

NEHEMIAH

*(to all)*

I, Cupbearer, lead thee forth.

THE FIVE MEN

*(earnestly)*

O, may our work alone speak of our worth.  
*(At this moment, the appearance of the men*

*changes. The dark garments they are wearing fall to the ground, showing bright, soft robes of ethereal nature. The men take on the forms of women as they stand in the moonlight, which has now become bright.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(beholding all with radiant countenance)*  
Ah, I have thought that thou wert men. I  
see

The woman in thee now!

*(peering into their faces)*

*(to SIGHT)*

Thou, Sight, art Intuition in disguise,—  
No wonder that thou hast discerning eyes.

*(to TOUCH)*

And, thou, Touch, art blest Gratitude. 'Tis  
well

Thou know'st events before the world can  
tell

They have begun; yea, friend, through grat-  
titude!

*(to TASTE)*

Beloved Patience, thou art woman, too,  
And male, as well; thou dost, indeed, renew  
The youth of those who follow thee aright.

*(to SMELL)*

Dear Charity, thou lead'st to day.

(to HEARING)

And thou, dear Wakefulness, forever true  
To highest good are thou. I scarcely knew  
That thou wert male and female.

(*looking closely*)

Ah, I see

The woman in thee now.

Friends, this is well, for thou wilt need to be  
Both male and female in this task ye do,—  
Complete and satisfied. Each captive Jew,  
When wakened, shall behold nor bond nor  
free

Is he, indeed. The courage of the male  
Is his, and woman's gentle tenderness;  
Complete and satisfied, he cannot fail.  
Yea, Israel's captives, still, shall richly bless  
All men. They shall behold God's husbandry;  
Wedded to Truth, all men shall then be free.  
Oft'times, my friends, a task at first seems  
light,

Though it loom large, indeed, to finite sight.  
Be not fair weather friends. Stay thou and  
fight

When fall discouragement and darkest  
night,—

Through fiercest battle stay and win,—for  
right.

“The God of heav'n, he will prosper us.”

## CANTICLE III

### HONEST DAILY NEEDS

DESCRIPTION: *A morning scene, showing a vast army of men ready for work on the waste walls of Jerusalem.*

DISCOVERED: *Eager groups of men carrying tools.*

ELIASHIB (the High Priest)  
(*beckoning to several priests*)

Come, brethren, let us build this sheep gate well.

SEVERAL PRIESTS  
(*together*)

And sanctify it to the Lord of Hosts.

MEN OF JERICHO

(*building and speaking together*)

What we have builded, future ages tell.

ZACCUR

Not one stroke of our hammers can be lost.

SONS OF HASSENAAH  
(*working at fish gate*)

We lay the beams thereof; the doors are set;  
The locks thereof, the bars thereof are fast.



MEREMOTH, MESHULLAM, and ZADOK  
*(together)*

We work that no one ever can forget.

SEVERAL TEKOITES

And we that peace and truth forever last.

JEHOIADA and MESHULLAM

*(working together at the old gate)*

We lay each beam thereof, and set each door.

MELATIAH and JABON

*(together)*

We work nor ask for any blessing more.

UZZIEL and HANANIAH

*(working on the broad wall)*

The broad wall must be perfect, too, that we

May see them safe in their captivity.

REPAIAH, JEDAIAH, and HATTUSH

*(working)*

May see *them* safe, and who are they?

MALCHIJAH and HASHUB

*(repairing the tower of the furnaces)*

Each vagrant thought that hath become the

prey

Of self.

SHALLUM

*(the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem,*

*working with his daughters)*

I came here with my daughters, they who  
rule

And work with me. Each one with her own

tool  
Is building.

*(the women drive nails)*

DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM

*(together)*

We came that all may see  
The utter helplessness, futility,  
Of those who come disguised as women, when  
The news of reconstruction reaches men.

HANUM

*(repairing the valley gate)*

Sanballat and Geshem, the ones you fear,  
Daughters of Shallum?

DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM

*(together)*

Not if we keep on building, tier on tier.

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM

The ones we fear,—and yet we cannot fear  
For God is God, alone, and he is All—  
Is just the cursed falsehoods that would tear  
One's true self from its union now with good.

MALCHIJAH

Ah, yes! One must abide

Forever at one's work in peace to know  
God's law aright. To conquer self, the foe  
Of progress, one must build high unto heav'n  
E'en for another's good; such is the leav'n  
Of understanding, wisdom, power, might,—  
All those who sit in darkness see this light.

MALCHIAH

*(building the dung gate)*

There is so much to cleanse from every  
thought,  
I build the dung gate. All that I have  
wrought  
Endures forever.

SHALLUM

*(repairing the gate to the fountain)*

I set the doors of this, the fountain gate.  
God's messengers may enter, but the fate  
Of those who come to rob is fixed, indeed.  
No one may enter here with form or creed.

NEHEMIAH

*(repairing the place over against the sepulchre of David)*

My friends, Sanballat hears we build this  
wall;  
The news has spread to him. "Ah, it shall  
fall!"—

This is his dire foreboding. We abide  
Forever at this task until we know  
Those in captivity are saved from foe.

REHUM, HASHABIAH, BAVAI, and EZER  
*(repairing near the turning of the wall)*

Never was work more welcome hour by  
hour,—

BARUCH

Welcome, because it proves there is one

pow'r.

MEREMOTH

*(working at door—to the priests,  
the men of the Plain)*

Courage, my friends, bear up, each day must  
bring

Its own reward.

BENJAMIN and HASHUB

*(working together)*

Friends, let our hammers ring

*(all hammering together)*

In glad applause.

*(joyous, ringing music)*

BINNUI and PALAL

*(hammering together)*

No enemy can ever turn us back,

THE NETHINIMS and TEKOTITES

*(working together)*

Those who would build for good can never  
lack.

THE PRIESTS

*(repairing near the horse gate)*

In learning meekness here, we may well find

No man upon this earth shall e'er unbind

Our work.

ZADOK AND SHEMAIAH

*(working together)*

If we toil on with love, we may renew

The waste walls with the fortified.

HANANIAH, HANUN AND MESHULLAM  
*(together)*

We knew  
Those shattered walls would one day be re-  
deemed!

MALCHIAH (the goldsmith's son)  
This broken shaft, it must be strongly  
beamed.

GOLDSMITHS AND MERCHANTS  
*(working together)*

Courage, my friends. Together we build well.  
*(Their tools fall. Ringing noises. The eld-  
est daughter of SHALLUM slips behind  
each worker and, picking up fallen tools,  
restores them to owners.)*

ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM  
*(handing tools to men)*

Here is thine hammer, friend;  
*(to another)*

thy trowel fell.

NEHEMIAH  
*(to all)*

Beware, my friends, one cometh in disguise,  
A messenger of foes. Keep well thine eyes  
Upon thy work.

*(passing to another and addressing him)*

Courage, my friend, work on,  
Until each task of thine is fitly done.  
*(to another, encouragingly)*

Work, till each task of thine is fitly done.  
(*Pausing behind a worker and regarding his  
work and tools approvingly.*)

Be not afraid of thy salvation, friend;  
Thy tools are clean, thy hands are true,  
The nail which thine hands doth send  
Strikes straight to the mark.  
This thing ye do is a blessing to all mankind.  
Thy work is a daily psalm of praise.  
In work thou canst ever find  
Love's home and Church, and universe,  
Messiah's blest heav'n, Mind.

(*Passing to another worker.*)

I, Nehemiah, urge thee on, these walls of  
thought  
Shall be constructed. All that thou hast  
wrought  
Must ever stand.

(*To another group.*)

Work as one man, work on,  
Until mankind is saved, earth's battle won.

(*To all, as if in prayer.*)

"Be not ye afraid of them; remember the  
Lord,—  
And fight for your brethren, your sons, and  
your daughters,  
Your wives, and your houses."

(Nehemiah 4:14.)

For I am Nehemiah, "The King's Cup-  
bearer."

And God, alone, is King of all the Earth.

## CANTICLE IV

### JEALOUSY AND DARK FOREBODINGS

DESCRIPTION: *A village of the Plain, representing a low order of thought. Everything in chaos. Rubbish of expensive materials heaped about, showing carelessness and sloth. The heat of the day.*

DISCOVERED: *SANBALLAT, governor of the Plain, is entering. He is an idol worshiper and carries with him a ghastly idol which he places with foolish awe on a high pedestal. He is a short, very heavy man, gaudily overdressed in ornate colored satin robes and much jewelry.*

SANBALLAT

*(with sinister smile to the messenger who enters with him at L.)*

So they rebuild those walls—poor, foolish Jews?

*(Laughs a loud, derisive laugh, which is*



*really no laugh at all but merely an animal ejaculation.)*

Bring Geshem here, at once!

*(With imperial wave of large, over-decorated hand to MESSENGER)*

MESSENGER

*(to SANBALLAT)*

Aye, Sir, I

Do thy bidding.

*(exit MESSENGER)*

*(Enter SENSUALITY at L. A woman of deceitful expression. One who has reached maturity, but still looks artificially young. She is dressed in flaming red velvet and wears many jewels.)*

SANBALLAT

*(walking across to the woman and chucking her rudely under the chin)*

Sweet lass, thy name?

SENSUALITY

*(simpering foolishly into SANBALLAT'S face)*

My name, Sir, is Sensuality.

I keep mankind in grim captivity.

SANBALLAT

*(eagerly grasping her hands until the woman fairly winces under the crushing handclasp)*

Hold, woman, I have work for thee to do;  
Thou shalt destroy each foolish, working

Jew.

Strange how I always find the help I need  
To aid me in the sowing of sin's seed!

(SANBALLAT and the woman, SENSUALITY, dance briskly about and, at the same time, laugh loudly and wickedly. They plot together. Enter several messengers. SENSUALITY breaks away from SANBALLAT and, as if giving him an exhibition of her frivolity, she slips quietly from one messenger to another, leering wickedly into each face, while she hums a foolish, sentimental love song. As she is singing, GESHEM, enters, L. He is a tall, heavy-set man, wearing the costly trappings of a ruler. SANBALLAT and GESHEM regard the woman approvingly as she sings. There are no words to the woman's song. Clashing, unrefined medley.)

GESHEM

(after SENSUALITY has ceased dancing, turns angrily to SANBALLAT and almost howls)  
Why have ye sent for me, Sanballat, pray?  
I am a Governor!

(With vast importance, while he struts  
about nervously.)

This busy day.

I, too, have much to see to, much to do.

SANBALLAT

*(in low tone)*

Didst thou not hear how every captive Jew  
Strives to rebuild the walls that lieth waste—  
The waste walls of Jerusalem? Make haste  
And give a plan to outwit all this task.

GESHEM

*(pondering)*

A plan? 'Tis simple! Let me think, I ask,  
One moment.

*(Thinks and rubs his forehead.)*

SENSUALITY

*(interrupting)*

Let me go to them, I pray.

Each man shall bow to me. Yea, I will stay  
The hands of those who work, through flattery.

*(SANBALLAT and GESHEM laugh loudly.)*

SANBALLAT

*(delightedly)*

Poor foolish wench, thy wit is not half bad.  
Our messengers will go with thee,

*(Summons messengers, who flock  
about SENSUALITY.)*

And had

We other emissaries—if we know

GESHEM

*(Interrupting)*

Each Jew

Must be restrained from work.

SENSUALITY

*(thinking)*

If we know of any others, they should go.

*(to SANBALLAT and GESHEM)*

Dear Sirs, I pray thee, let me bring

My sisters. Each has way

Of evil fully learned.

SANBALLAT

*(interested)*

Thy sisters? Give each name,

And I will judge.

SENSUALITY

*(proudly)*

The younger one is Shame.

The elder one is quiet, she is Sleep.

There are but three of us, yet we can keep

Each Jew from toiling further on his task.

SANBALLAT

*(to MESSENGER)*

Bring hither her

*(indicating SENSUALITY)*

two sisters.

SENSUALITY

*(to MESSENGER)*

Say, I ask

Them to come quickly. We have work this  
hour

That will require united strength and power.

(MESSENGER *departs quickly at L.*)

GESHEM

(*turning to servant at his side*)

Go thou and tell those Jews who toil, that we  
Desire to see them in this village here;

Tell them that we can help them, set them  
free;

That we would talk with them. Tell them to  
fear

Not to come hither.

SANBALLAT

(*to servant at his side*)

Tell the Jews the Plain

Is waiting for them; that the ripened grain  
And fruit of all our kingdom wait. Ah me,  
Why should they for those in captivity  
Still toil?

BOTH SERVANTS

(*together*)

We go, Sirs.

GESHEM

(*to servants*)

Wait until the three

Sisters of sin may likewise go with thee.

(*Enter SHAME and SLEEP. They quickly embrace SENSUALITY. SHAME is dressed in deep black and walks with bowed head as if fearing to look up. SLEEP keeps her eyes closed. She is dressed in a shadowy,*

*vapory-like gown.)*

(to SHAME)

What canst thou do, thou sad-eyed woman,  
here?

SHAME

I follow Sensuality. Men fear  
My very name. I am Disease, the curse  
Of sin unfettered. Couldst thou summon  
worse  
Than I?

GESHEM

(to SLEEP)

And thou, frail shadow, canst thou, too,  
Do ought to hinder any working Jew?

SLEEP

*(raising languid eyes)*

My name is Sleep, and after men have well  
Been bound in chains by her,

*(pointing to SENSUALITY)*

and her,

*(indicating SHAME)*

I tell

My story to them, promising that I  
Will bring forgetfulness. I close each eye  
Of him who listens to me, and I claim  
To be a blessing, but my very shame  
Is covered. I am Inactivity.  
My other names are Death, Inanity.

SANBALLAT

*(laughing loudly)*

Ha, Ha, I see, He, He, Ha, Ha, I see!

*(Waving them on.)*

Go forth, ye messengers and ladies fair,  
And speak to those poor working Jews o'er  
there.

Bring them to us, or cause them to desist  
From working.

*(Patting SLEEP on shoulder.)*

'Tis true, my dear, they cannot thee resist!

SANBALLAT AND GESHEM

*(together)*

Go forth, go forth, go forth,  
Bind them, hold them, and drive them quickly  
here,  
Through flattery, or shame, or sleep, or fear.  
Go forth, go forth, go forth.

## CANTICLE V

### A STRUGGLE WITH SELF

DESCRIPTION: *Same as in Canticle III except the walls are nearly repaired.*

DISCOVERED: NEHEMIAH and all the workers at their tasks on the walls.

(enter FIRST MESSENGER)

#### FIRST MESSENGER

My Lord, Sanballat, Governor of Plain,  
Hath sent me to thee. He would once again  
Hold counsel with Cupbearer of the King.

(*Endeavoring to lead NEHEMIAH away.*)

(NEHEMIAH draws back as if refusing to go.)  
Sanballat, sir,

(*insistently*)

has counselled me to bring  
Thee to him that thou may'st together talk  
These matters over.

(NEHEMIAH draws back.)

No, thou need'st not walk.  
I have Sanballat's chariot.  
(*All workers stop working on the walls and listen to the conversation between NEHEMIAH and the messenger.*)

#### NEHEMIAH

But I am doing here a great work. Answer  
why



This work should cease, the while I go to talk  
With them?

*(Turning back to his work.)*

Tell them I shall ne'er walk  
Nor ride to them. This good work must not  
cease!

*(A second messenger hurriedly enters, L.)*

SECOND MESSENGER

*(as if pointing to the Plain—to NEHEMIAH)*  
I bear a message, too; I bring thee peace,  
From Geshem, Governor, my Lord;  
And he hath sent me forth to bring this word  
To thee. Come down, he begs of thee to-day,  
And talk this good work over, and the way  
Of progress.

NEHEMIAH

*(firmly)*

Sir, no work was ever done  
Through useless talk.

'Tis better, one by one,  
That we should learn to work, and not to say  
How we have worked. I cannot come today,  
Nor any other time.

*(Turns back to his work; all begin hammering together)*

*(Enter SENSUALITY. She goes straight to NEHEMIAH, and through pantomime, attempts vainly to entice him with her eyes. NEHEMIAH looks away from her)*

and continues his work. She next tries to hold his face close to hers. He eludes her attempted embraces. Discouraged at NEHEMIAH'S repulses, she then goes to the other men. One by one they drop their tools and half return her caresses. NEHEMIAH alone repulses SENSUALITY each time she returns to him. He continues his work. Not a word is spoken. Every time one of the workers drops his tools because of SENSUALITY'S caresses, the daughters of SHALLUM appear and restore them to the idle hands.)

SENSUALITY

.. (in final attempt to gain NEHEMIAH'S attention)

Come,

(whispering)

Come with me,

I will give thee ease

And joy and gladness.

Wouldst thou not for these

Lay down this heavy anvil?

(pointing to tool)

NEHEMIAH

(firmly)

No, for I, Cupbearer of the King, must ever try

To do my best.

## SENSUALITY

*(Gently stroking NEHEMIAH'S hands.)*

Thou art so brave, my dear.

It is thy bravery I love.

*(Still caressing his hands.)*

These wondrous hands! How they have  
wrought!

Ah, do not fear

My fond caresses.

*(NEHEMIAH brushes her aside and quickly begins work on the walls. SENSUALITY, seeing that it is useless to try to win NEHEMIAH, softly steals again to the other men, who are watching her with jealous glances. NEHEMIAH works on. SENSUALITY flits from one to another and casts her spell over each of them in turn. They rapturously return her caresses. Seeing that she has all of the workers, except NEHEMIAH, in her power, SENSUALITY quickly summons SHAME and SLEEP, who are standing quietly at L.)*

## SHAME

*(to one of the workers who has been holding  
SENSUALITY in his arms)*

My name is Sister Shame. Each working Jew  
Shall be inactive. Yea, let me renew  
My boast. Not one shall work, for I

Shall make each one afraid. Each man shall  
try

To shake me off!

*(She hovers like a cloud over the tired workers; with one hand she summons SLEEP.)*

Come, Sleep; come, Sister Sleep,

My work is finished!

*(The hands of the men drop listlessly.)*

Now I pray thee keep

These hands from toiling, and these eyes  
from light.

My work is finished!

*(The men drop their heads in shame.)*

Lead to blackest night

These earnest Jews.

*(SLEEP approaches the men. They reach out their arms to her as if begging her to come to them. They yawn stupidly and sigh.)*

SLEEP

*(surprised)*

I—I have naught to do!

Shame, Sensuality, hath bound each Jew!

*(They all nod their heads in sleep except the daughters of SHALLUM and NEHEMIAH, who work diligently on. The eldest daughter of SHALLUM approaches NEHEMIAH. He is so busily engaged in work that he has not noticed the sleeping toilers.)*

(to NEHEMIAH)  
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER OF SHALLUM  
(to NEHEMIAH)

Cupbearer, awake those stupid Jews who  
sleep!

NEHEMIAH

*(regarding the sleepers)*

Our God shall fight for us.

Yea, He shall keep

Our hands from idleness.

(to DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM)

The trumpet sound!

*(Loud blowing of trumpet.)*

They shall awake!

*(Men begin to awaken.)*

Their better selves when found

Shall keep them. Daughters, tell them they  
shall be

Both male and female, joyous, sinless, free.

(DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM go quickly and  
awaken the men more fully, merely by  
placing the workers' own discarded  
weapons and tools in their listless hands.)

(All the men arise, look about in startled  
manner and continue the work quietly.  
With a spear in one hand and a weapon  
in the other, each daughter of SHALLUM  
stands back of every group of men as a  
faithful guard.)

Tell them,

(to DAUGHTERS OF SHALLUM)

I pray thee, each with servant may  
At night lodge in Jerusalem. The way  
Grows brighter; toilers, we are not afraid.  
God hath made "good" all things that He  
hath made.

(NEHEMIAH rises suddenly, as if with inspiration, and seizes first one messenger and then another. He roughly shakes each, in turn, and tears off outer garment.)

This messenger

(indicating SANBALLAT'S messenger)

that we have dreaded, see,  
Is Intuition in disguise; was she  
Not Sight?

INTUITION

The ills we deem dark woes may be,  
When overcome, a guide to lead to light.

NEHEMIAH

(shaking second messenger until outer  
covering falls)

And this one, well thou know'st, was one time  
Taste.

PATIENCE

And now my name is Patience.

NEHEMIAH

Thou, alas,

Art messenger who teaches us to waste  
No time in murmuring.

PATIENCE

*(as if holding aloft a cup)*

Taste of life's cup,  
Of grief or joy, let not this chalice pass!

NEHEMIAH

*(Looking SENSUALITY squarely in the eye;  
her outer garment falls, revealing a beautiful woman.)*

Ah, thou art Gratitude! Thou troubl'st me  
So long to-day as Touch! This is the curse  
Of all earth's curses, mankind fears as worse  
Than Death. The touch of Touch brings  
bitter woe

Because it claims to hold, caress, and go  
From life to death.

GRATITUDE

Yea, I am Gratitude!

I best express myself by giving much  
To all mankind.

NEHEMIAH

*(pondering)*

So thou wert one time Touch!  
Can this be why, in future years, there is  
Destined to come a King to earth?—and this  
Shall be his message: Gratitude and Peace!

*(as if prophesying)*

Yea, he will raise the dead with words like  
these:

“Father, I thank Thee!” Men shall even  
know

The garment’s hem he wears shall heal their  
woe.

If they but reach out for the Truth, they  
shall

Be freed forever from the galling thrall  
Of sensuality, which comes to bind  
Mankind with touch of finite love.

*(to all)*

We find

Our freedom, friends, forever as we give  
Our all of gratitude that men may live.

Egyptian darkness, sensuality,  
The touch of finite self,—from these, be free,

*(eagerly to GRATITUDE)*

Mankind! Blest Gratitude, no name like thine  
Hath ever turned earth’s water into wine!

*(To SHAME, as outer garment falls.)*

Ah, thou wert Smell!

CHARITY

But now I come to bless  
Earth in the robes of Charity.

NEHEMIAH

’Tis true

Thou dost not scent sin’s scandal, nor confess



To curious interest in an old or new  
Recital of men's weaknesses. Thou art  
The friend of all.

*(For a long time, NEHEMIAH regards SLEEP.*

*She does not change. SLEEP constantly eludes the Cupbearer's steadfast, searching look. While NEHEMIAH is actually trying to "see through" SLEEP, and SLEEP is trying to evade the Prophet, HEARING, now WAKEFULNESS, dressed in loose, flowing white garments, slips quietly into the room, and takes her place with the other four guards at NEHEMIAH's side. SLEEP, beholding WAKEFULNESS' appearance, shudders and makes quick exit. NEHEMIAH, turning, beholds WAKEFULNESS, and embraces her lovingly.)*

Brave Wakefulness, my friend!

Thou art the friend of friends which God  
doth send!

WAKEFULNESS

*(reassuringly, to NEHEMIAH)*

Blest Cupbearer, I come to-day to hear  
For thee. There is nor pain, nor any fear!

NEHEMIAH

*(gratefully, regarding the five women)*

Ah, this one here

*(holding WAKEFULNESS' hand)*

is friend, indeed,—'tis she,

True Wakefulness, come to us now that we  
May keep awake and set our brethren free.  
(*At this moment, heavy-eyed SLEEP appears  
again, L. She yawns stupidly; seems  
about to enter but is apparently afraid  
of WAKEFULNESS.*)

WAKEFULNESS

(*pointing derisively at SLEEP, who cowers to  
the ground and almost creeps out of sight*)  
Sleep hath no better self. She hath a need  
To hide herself! Death is her cruel creed.  
My friend,

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

there yet are days of grief and woe  
When death, or sleep, will try to make thee  
go

As fettered slave to hell—but thou shalt see  
The world's great need of immortality,  
And, seeing this, thou shalt, indeed, be free!

NEHEMIAH

(*to all*)

Half of thee hold'st the spears

(*to the women*)

Until each star in highest heav'n appears.  
While half shall work.

(*To the men. They all return joyously  
to their work on the wall.*)

The way  
Grows ever brighter to us. Father, pray

That none of us may falter, till we see  
Man is both male and female, deathless, free.

*(As if in prophecy.)*

I see on earth, in long, long years to come,  
Half of thee shalt, indeed, protect the home;  
While half shall win earth's peace—this is  
God's will!

The home thou shalt protect is consciousness;  
The wakefulness all men express shall bless  
This earth-home with true, patient tender-  
ness.

The intuition of our God shall be  
Made manifest! Blest gratitude shall free  
Earth's fettered ones; and charity shall stand  
Prepared to lend to all a helping hand.  
There shall be no more war, nor hate, nor  
strife

Within earth's home in heav'n,—this is  
Life!

## CANTICLE VI

### A STRUGGLE WITH POVERTY AND GREED

DESCRIPTION: *The scene is again as in Canticles III and V, the partly constructed walls of Jerusalem. About six weeks later in time than Canticle V.*

DISCOVERED: *Groups of discontented Jews standing about engaged in angry conversation. Groups of anxious women and fretful children. The women wearily shift baskets of corn and wine from their arms to their heads. They sigh disconsolately.)*

SHEMAIAH

*(discontentedly)*

We, our sons and daughters, many are!  
That we may live, we take up corn and wine.  
Yea, we have borrowed money from afar  
That this work might proceed.  
Indeed, our fine  
Of tax is great!

WIFE OF SHEMAIAH

*(sullenly)*

Why should this work go on, when, day by  
day,

Our debt grows larger?

MESHULLAM

*(kicking at wall)*

We have naught to pay!

*(Groups of angry men walk about and kick at  
wall as if they would destroy it.)*

We have encumbered vineyards,—  
all our lands!

MEREMOTH

*(fiercely)*

And this is all we have!

*(Pointing derisively at wall.)*

My very hands

Are wearied.

BAVAI

*(peevishly)*

I mortgaged all my lands—I

Have naught more.

WIFE OF BAVAI

*(weeping)*

I know it!

*(rocking back and forth)*

I know it! Ah,

I weep and sigh

But no one cares.

BINNUI

Yet our flesh is exactly as the flesh

Of our own brethren, our children, too,  
And their children. Would we them enmesh,  
Our sons and daughters, into bondage?

*(Angrily approaches NEHEMIAH, who  
alone continues to build.)*

Jew,

Speak up! Some are already bought  
With no power to redeem

*(savagely)*

and thou hast wrought

This mischief!

*(At one side, an auctioneer is asking for bids  
on the children. The rulers make va-  
rious offers.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(rising slowly from his work and towering  
above all)*

Not as they seem

Are countless ills to-day.

*(Turns to messenger and summons nobles  
and rulers who are engaged in bidding on  
children. They crowd about NEHEMIAH.)*

Men, I pray,

Listen, and find at once a better way  
To meet each need. Thou dost exact in whole  
Usury of thy brethren, and thy toll  
Is death. Our brethren, the Jews redeemed  
shall be,

Not in some far-off time, but now and here.

They, sold unto the heathen, shall be free  
From cursed debt, disease, and human fear.

*(Shaking his clenched fists into the  
faces of the rulers.)*

And wouldst thou even sell thy brethren  
For stupid ease? Quick, answer me, my men!  
*(There is a long silence. The rulers and  
nobles stand with bowed heads, as if  
ashamed.)*

Shall they be sold for us; canst thou not say  
A word—not even one? There is none, nay  
Not one to e'er condone this usury.

*(All men stand with heads lowered.)*

*(NEHEMIAH walks back to the wall as if his  
words to the rulers were finished; he  
picks up an anvil and gives a few ringing  
strokes, and then suddenly faces about  
and paces his way back to the silent men.)*

“It is not good that ye do; ought ye not  
To walk in the fear of our God, because of  
The reproach of the heathen, our enemies?  
I likewise, and my brethren, and my serv-  
ants,

Might exact of them money and corn;  
I pray you, let us leave off this usury.  
Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day,  
Their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards,  
And their houses, also the hundredth part

Of the money, and of the corn, the wine,  
And of the oil, that ye exact of them"

(Nehemiah 5:9, 10, 11.)

*(A long silence. The women are standing beside the rulers with baskets of corn and wine half extended to them. The rulers reach out their hands to receive the baskets, but as they listen to NEHEMIAH'S words, their empty hands drop back to their sides.)*

SHALLUM

*(speaking for all)*

"We will restore them, and will require  
nothing of them ;

So will we do as thou sayest."

(Nehemiah 5:12.)

NEHEMIAH

*(to messenger)*

Go, call the priests, an oath we'll take of this  
That they should do according to their  
promise.

*(Shakes lap as if emptying it of something.)*

"So God shake out every man from his house,  
And from his labour, that performeth not  
this promise,

Even thus be he shaken out and emptied."

(Nehemiah 5:13.)



ALL

(*together*)

Amen! Praise the Lord! God be praised!

NEHEMIAH

(*with hand uplifted*)

At my table now I entertain

One hundred-fifty Jews:

The fruit and grain

Of governors we eat not. Think of me,

O, Lord, Thou God of good, Grant that I be

A faithful servant till this wall shall stand

A worthy tribute to our Father's hand.

"Think upon me, my God, for good,

According to all that I have done

For this people"—(Nehemiah 5:19.)

### CANTICLE VII

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE WITH SELF

DESCRIPTION: *Showing walls completed except doors.*

DISCOVERED: NEHEMIAH *stands alone looking at the opening where doors should be.*

(*Enter PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENT, a messenger from SANBALLAT. PRIDE says nothing. He struts about looking at wall. Whistles proudly.*)

PRIDE

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

Splendid work! Marvelous! Indeed, I won-

der, friend,  
At all thou and these Jews have done. Pray  
lend  
An ear. My governor, Sanballat, sends thee  
peace  
And joy. He would, himself, convey to thee  
these greetings.

*(looking at wall)*

Wondrous! My friend,  
didst thou do all,  
Thou and these Jews? It seems, indeed, this  
wall  
Is built to stand. I marvel at thy might,  
Thy wondrous skill in building this aright!

#### NEHEMIAH

*(For a moment, he listens eagerly. A dazed,  
stupid expression steals across his face.  
With a gesture, as if pushing the words  
of PRIDE away from him, he speaks slowly  
—to himself.)*

“O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek  
thee;  
My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth  
for Thee, . . . . .  
To see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have  
seen Thee  
In the sanctuary . . . . .  
When I remember Thee upon my bed,  
And meditate on Thee in the night watches.

Because Thou hast been my help,  
Therefore in the shadow of Thy wings  
Will I rejoice." (Ps. 63:1-7.)

*(Enter a driver and golden chariot; a richly  
trapped beast. A footman and messenger  
are close at hand.)*

MESSENGER

*(to PRIDE)*

My lord, I wait; and art thou ready quite?  
If so, we'll journey onward, e'er 'tis night.

PRIDE

*(pleadingly to NEHEMIAH)*

Come down with me. Sanballat waits to hear  
Thy mighty conquest over sin and fear.  
Come with me, friend.

NEHEMIAH

*(resolutely)*

"I am doing a great work,  
So that I cannot come down;  
Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,  
And—come—down—to—you?"

(Nehemiah 6:3.)

PRIDE

*(insisting)*

They wait for thee at Ono.

NEHEMIAH

Let them wait! I have a work. Yea, I know  
It must continue.

PRIDE

*(pointing to wall)*

To tell them of this dost thou refuse to go?  
Come with me to the village of Ono.

NEHEMIAH

"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot  
come down ;

Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,  
And come down to you?"

*(Nehemiah 6:3.)*

*(The driver slowly turns the chariot around;  
the footman, the messenger and PRIDE  
follow. They exeunt while NEHEMIAH  
slowly repeats:)*

"Why should the work cease, whilst I leave  
it,

And come down to you?"

*(Four men enter carrying mortar-trough;  
after placing it, they exeunt.)*

*(NEHEMIAH turns back to the contemplation  
of the work on the wall. PREJUDICE, a  
messenger from SANBALLAT, enters, al-  
most creeps about, and whispers as if  
frightened. Goes up to mortar which NE-  
HEMIAH is mixing, and looks at it fear-  
fully.)*

Some one has mixed this mortar wrong, my  
friend,

Sh— what have I said. I did not mean to tell

That shameful plot.

NEHEMIAH

A plot ye say? Pray lend  
Assistance in unraveling it.  
(NEHEMIAH *ceases his work and appears to  
be much disturbed.*)

PREJUDICE

Meshullam, Zadok, Ezra, ah, for shame  
I should not speak of this! I would not say  
One word to turn thee from thy friendships,  
nay,  
Not one word; but (*whispering*), 'twas Shal-  
lum said to me  
That ye were hard task-master! Ah, I see  
I have been wrong in telling this.  
(*As if repentant.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*continuing his mixing of mortar*)

Alas, thy name  
Is prejudice\*! (*pointing to exit*) Go! Thou  
may'st pass  
Forever from my sight! Thou canst not tell  
The light from darkness. Go, the gates of  
hell  
Swing back for such as thee.

(PREJUDICE, *muttering, starts to leave.*)

PREJUDICE

I wouldst not turn.  
Thee e'er against a brother, but, I yearn

\* When Nehemiah perceives that evil is impersonal, the  
word typifying evil is not capitalized.

To tell thee how Hanani says that thou  
Sh— art basely wrong—Sh, what have I  
spoken now?

NEHEMIAH

*(dropping his mortar mixer, he places hands  
over ears so that he cannot hear)*

Of all the messengers Sanballat prides,  
Thou art the falsest one,—yea, thou! Death  
hides

Behind thy muttered murmurings! Go now  
From me—Ah, never more shalt thou  
Deceive me, crafty, whispering abuse,  
Thy name is prejudice, and I refuse  
To listen to thee, coward! Whispering,  
Go back to hades whence thy lispings spring.  
I shall rely on God to tell me all  
About my fellow-man. *(lifting eyes)*

On Him I call  
For righteous judgment! God, alone, is  
good,

And, in His sight, man now is understood!  
One day, a singer comes to earth to say:

“Our feet shall stand” within Jerusalem  
Where human prejudice hath no more sway.  
“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

*(Psalms 122:6.)*

*(Exit PREJUDICE.)*

(HUMAN RECOGNITION, a messenger from

GESHEM *enters, unobserved, and stands close to NEHEMIAH'S side while he works.*)

HUMAN RECOGNITION

My name is Human Recognition, friend.  
I never hesitate gladly to lend  
My aid. Geshem commissions me to say  
He would reward thee for thy work to-day—  
Yea, he will lavish all that thou wouldst ask  
For having carried through this wondrous  
task.

Come down to Ono, village of the Plain.  
And he will give thee lands of ripened grain.  
I gladly lend my name to every one  
Because my title is so justly won.  
Cupbearer, if it be to thee the same  
We will be going now.

*(Taking NEHEMIAH by the arm.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(as if brushing aside a troublesome viper)*

Why go with thee?

HUMAN RECOGNITION

To get thy full reward. Friend, thou shalt be  
A ruler.

NEHEMIAH

*(firmly)*

I have reward. None can tell  
Save God alone, my recompense, how well  
I am repaid.

## HUMAN RECOGNITION

But it is fully right  
That governors should tell thee of thy might  
And wisdom.

### NEHEMIAH

*(hands raised to heaven)*

“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son  
of man, in whom there is no help.

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his  
earth;

In that very day his thoughts perish.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for  
his help,

Whose hope is in the Lord his God;

Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and  
all that therein is; which keepeth truth  
forever.”

(Ps. 146:3-6.)

*(About the middle of the Psalm, GESHEM'S  
messenger, HUMAN RECOGNITION, slowly  
departs. NEHEMIAH, alone, again turns  
to view the wall.)*

### SHIFTLESSNESS

*(sauntering in, walks up to the mortar and  
looks at it sneeringly—to NEHEMIAH)*

What is this? Ah, mortar? Then why mind  
Mixing this so?

*(NEHEMIAH is carefully placing in the lime.)*

Cast it in!

*(Knocks NEHEMIAH'S elbow so that the lime*



*slips carelessly in. Laughs.)*

Cast it in!

This will last after thou art dead and gone.

Cast it in!

*(jostling shovel)*

Cast it in, why stand alone

For such exactness?

*(NEHEMIAH, saying nothing, goes to the wall and carefully measures the opening of a gate. SHIFTLESSNESS follows him and jeers at him.)*

Never mind measuring;

Cast it in.

*(NEHEMIAH picks up the heavy gate which belongs in the opening.)*

Who cares how it fits?

Ah, bring

Thy talents to the things that count,—this gate

Is merely iron! It can have no fate—

'Tis lifeless metal! Though it fit not, why  
Shouldst thou then care? Why shouldst thou  
even try?

*(SHIFTLESSNESS saunters about; carelessly  
knocks down one gate after another and  
kicks each about. Crashing noises.)*

NEHEMIAH

Ah, shiftlessness, we two have met before.

Thou may'st leave!

(points to exit)

I would not listen more  
To all thy foolish prattle.

(pushing him away)

I am here  
To do my best. Thou canst not interfere.  
Of all the messengers that Geshem sent  
Thou art the one whose crookedness hath bent  
Men from the line of rectitude. Thy ways  
Are not God's ways. For this, let Him be  
praised!

(exit SHIFTLESSNESS)

(A woman, dressed in many dull colors, enters. She is SELF-PITY. She slowly approaches NEHEMIAH, and raising his calloused hands, looks at them, and shakes her head pityingly.)

SELF-PITY

I cannot give my name. I came from one  
Who tells me of the marvels thou hast done.  
And not one Jew hath praised thee!

(She takes NEHEMIAH'S hands very tenderly  
in her own and gently rubs her hands  
over them, as if feeling their callouses.)

Poor hands, true,  
Toiled long, in vain, for not one grateful Jew  
Hath stayed to bless thee! Tobiah says that  
he  
Would give thee his thanks in sincerity.

Poor hands! Poor hands!

*(She continues to rub them gently. For a moment, NEHEMIAH almost weeps. He quickly recovers himself, and snatches his hands away.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(peering into woman's face)*

What is thy name? Where have we met before?

Thou hast annoyed me much in days of yore!  
"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.

Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it,  
And—come—down—to—you?"

SELF-PITY

But thou shouldst have reward. Thou toil'st  
but they,

Those Jews *(scornfully)* are neither grateful  
nor obey

Thy word.

NEHEMIAH

*(almost assents, but quickly turning away from the woman for a moment, regards his work on the wall. Again turning to the woman.)*

What is thy name? Where have we met before?

Thou hast annoyed me much in days of yore.  
*(Turning again to the wall, and disregarding*

*the woman, he begins measuring, as he intones these words from Psalm 78:)*

"Give ear, O My people, to My law;  
Incline your ears to the words of My mouth.  
I will open My mouth in a parable:  
I will utter dark sayings of old:  
That the generations to come might know  
them,  
Even the children which should be born;  
Who should arise and declare them to their  
children."

*(In the midst of the intonation of this Psalm,  
SELF-PITY, weeping bitterly, stands be-  
fore NEHEMIAH.)*

SELF-PITY

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

I am Self-Pity. I did not intend  
To give my name. I came disguised as friend.  
*(weeping)*

But I am deadly foe. Yea, oft before  
I have annoyed thee in the days of yore.  
*(Weeping bitterly, SELF-PITY exits.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(kneeling)*

God be praised! Magnify His holy name!  
Once more, Thy servant is redeemed from  
shame.

*(Enter a wondrously beautiful woman. She  
is PERSONAL ATTRACTION. NEHEMIAH is*

working earnestly when she enters, but he immediately becomes excited and confused. It is evident that he is doing poor work. All the time he looks admiringly at the woman. He drops his tools; the gate he is hammering into place crashes to the ground and, in its fall, tears a part of the wall away. Neither NEHEMIAH nor the woman speak. As if delighting in her conquest and NEHEMIAH'S failure to work intelligently, the woman smiles joyously and exits. With a disappointed expression, and looking ever toward the door whence PERSONAL ATTRACTION had departed, NEHEMIAH wearily takes up his work. Enter the five senses—SIGHT, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, HEARING. The five men stand near NEHEMIAH as if to encourage him to continue his work. Again the woman, PERSONAL ATTRACTION, appears. She is more beautiful than ever in a robe of shimmering material. NEHEMIAH gasps delightedly when he sees the woman. He tries to return to his work, but it is plain that his work disgusts him, and that he has eyes only for the beautiful creature who stands near him. The woman, seeing NEHEMIAH'S displeasure

with his work, laughs joyously and departs. The five corporeal senses look heavenward as if in prayer. Again the woman enters. She is even more beautiful than before, having thrown a rope of wondrous jewels about her neck and a fleecy, silken shawl upon her head. When NEHEMIAH sees her enter, he ceases work entirely and looks unceasingly at the woman. He sits down on a pile of building material. The five senses bring him, first a hammer, then a trowel, then a joist. They try to encourage him to go on with his work but he refuses. He does nothing except to stare admiringly at PERSONAL ATTRACTION. Finally, NEHEMIAH gives one quick glance heavenward as if in prayer. At once the spell of mesmeric attraction is broken. In a moment's time, the gleaming robes fall at the woman's feet, showing an ugly creature dressed in sack-cloth. The five senses change again to beautiful women. NEHEMIAH rises quickly from his reclining position and with eager joy begins his work. He intelligently repairs the large gap in the wall caused by PERSONAL ATTRACTION'S first appearance. PERSONAL ATTRACTION, now in sack-cloth, ugly and old,

*tries to keep NEHEMIAH from working. She goes to him, attempts to seize his hands and hold him with her gaze, but her efforts are all in vain. Joyously NEHEMIAH continues to work.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(to the woman)*

God be praised! I know thy heinous name,—  
'Tis personal attraction, lust and shame!  
Whene'er thou comest first, clad in the flesh  
Of costly, vain attraction ye enmesh  
Thy victims, well thou keepest them from  
gain  
Of true salvation through thy crafty, vain  
attentions.  
The second time thou com'st, men loathe their  
work;  
Their days become a useless drag; they shirk  
all honest duty.  
The third time thou dost come, men cease  
their toil,—  
Thou bind'st upon them fetters, coil on coil.  
The world of useful joy would pass away,  
If thou, poor foolish virgin, hadst thy say;  
But as men lift their eyes to heav'n and pray  
The joy of work comes forth into the light,—  
And thou art then a monster in their sight!  
Go from me, woman, never, never more  
Shalt thou appear to darken my own door



Of thought. My daily work is all I need;  
My work is my attraction and my meed  
Of joy and peace and happiness and rest!

*(as he pushes the woman away)*

Woman, for me, my work is ever best.

*(The woman, weeping bitterly, exits.)*

(NEHEMIAH continues his work. The five senses now changed into the women, GRATITUDE, PATIENCE, CHARITY, WAKEFULNESS and INTUITION, with hands raised as if blessing NEHEMIAH, all leave.)

*(Enter HUMAN WILL. At first sight, he appears to be a very small man, but he increases constantly in size as he speaks. HUMAN WILL is accompanied by his son, DISHONESTY, and his daughter, GREED. DISHONESTY is very cowardly in appearance. GREED is large and florid.)*

HUMAN WILL

*(breathlessly to NEHEMIAH)*

This will not do! Come, come with me, my friend,

Thou must come now. I say so. Wherefore bend

Thy back in labor when I summon thee?

*(NEHEMIAH is fitting a gate in place.)*

Not there! Not there!

*(Indicating disapproval of placing gate*



*in that opening.)*

Come with me now. Why be  
So earnest?

*(HUMAN WILL takes NEHEMIAH by the  
shoulder and pushes him about.)*

Go there!

*(pushing him to another place)*

Go on *(pushing him)* Go!

I said there! *(angrily)* Not there! There!

There! No,

Not there!

*(Pushing NEHEMIAH about, HUMAN WILL  
appears to be utterly exhausted.)*

Not there! *(wearily)* I said so! *(Very  
wearily)* I—said—so.

*(DISHONESTY is attempting to displace good  
building material with defective timbers;  
good stones with mere lumps of sand  
which fairly crumble away. GREED has-  
tens about and picks up bolts, nails, tools  
and many other valuables and hides them  
in her flowing sleeves.)*

NEHEMIAH

Mark thy dishonest children, mark the greed  
*(pointing to GREED)*

And avarice of her, and mark the need  
Thy son, Dishonesty, hath now to go  
With wiser vision or—

*(DISHONESTY stumbles and falls )*

## HUMAN WILL

*(turning to his children)*

Ah, I did not know

She (*pointing to GREED*) was a thief, a robber; ah, me!

And he (*pointing to DISHONESTY*) deceitful, crafty, tell me, can it be?

(*DISHONESTY picks himself up. HUMAN WILL weeps.*)

## NEHEMIAH

Thy name is human will. Should I not know  
Thy falsity? Hast thou not led me on  
O'er crag and fen of self, in days long gone?  
I know thy name.

(*HUMAN WILL still weeps bitterly. His two children steal quietly from the stage.*)

I know the weariness  
Of thy poor counsels; yea, thy faithlessness!  
Of all his messengers, Sanballat's curse  
Hath never made of villany, a worse  
Than thou. I know thee, human will; I  
know——

I know thy wretched leadings—Go, Go, Go!

(*HUMAN WILL continues to weep, pleadingly and with false meekness, to NEHEMIAH.*)

I shall abide with thee, here, here, now, now,  
Until thou goest with me, thou, thou, thou,  
thou!

*(with feigned gentleness)*

I do not want my way; come, thou, with me.

NEHEMIAH

False meekness, human will, thou dost assume,

Since in thy scheming heart thou hast but room

For self. Father, thy will be done!

*(At these words, HUMAN WILL falls at NEHEMIAH'S feet.)*

With Thee,

I go where Truth directs. Yea, I am free  
To go where Love commands! There dwell-  
eth I,

As God's own image.

HUMAN WILL

*(looking up from the ground)*

Come with me. Oh, why

Not go?

NEHEMIAH

*(resolutely)*

I go where God directs the way.

No human will can have the power to say  
Where I should go, or where my work shall  
be;

The God in heav'n, alone, instructeth me.

*(HUMAN WILL appears to completely flatten  
out on the ground at NEHEMIAH'S feet.)*

*He is wholly exhausted and, in his ex-*

*haustion, his tongue protrudes as if he were fairly eating the dust of the earth.)*  
Thou art sin's serpent, doomed to eat the dust  
(HUMAN WILL *is creeping away*)

Of cannot, do not, shall, and will, and must.

HUMAN WILL

*(muttering to himself as he creeps away)*  
I shall, I will, I can, I must now go  
Back to perdition, human will and woe.

NEHEMIAH

*(as if prophesying)*

One comes in future days to do God's will.  
*(As if beholding someone present, radiantly.)*  
He stills earth's tempests with Love's "Peace,  
be still!"

*(As these last words are spoken, HUMAN WILL, silenced, exits by creeping away.)*

*(Enter PERSONALITY. He is a very large, clumsy, awkward, pompous man. He is constantly tripping as if over himself and falling. He stands before NEHEMIAH, who is working, and suddenly falls before him. NEHEMIAH in turn stumbles over PERSONALITY, but does not fall. Each time NEHEMIAH stumbles and makes a mis-step, some of his good work is overturned.)*

PERSONALITY

Here am I! See me! Here am I! See me!

Here am I! Can it be, can it be  
Thou dost not see me?

NEHEMIAH

*(stumbling over PERSONALITY, but not  
falling)*

I detected thee!

*(PERSONALITY repeatedly places himself in  
NEHEMIAH'S way, but each time the Cup-  
bearer sees the impostor and quickly steps  
aside to avoid falling over him.)*

PERSONALITY

Why step aside for me? Thou art afraid!  
*(exultingly)*

NEHEMIAH

*(firmly)*

Ah, no, God made all things that were made!

PERSONALITY

God? I *(indicating himself)* am creator, I  
am wondrous, I——

NEHEMIAH

*(interrupting)*

Thou'rt false from the beginning, yea, sin's  
lie!

PERSONALITY

Thou callest me false, then I shall go. Not  
here

May I remain! I must have awe and fear!

*(PERSONALITY, much offended, rises majes-  
tically and exits)*

(Enter HUMAN EASE, a large, very fleshy woman. She goes straight to the gate NEHEMIAH is working on, and reclines wearily upon it. She sighs.)

NEHEMIAH  
(to the woman)

Begone!

(HUMAN EASE sighs and rests more easily on the gate.)

Begone!

(HUMAN EASE sighs wearily and refuses to move.)

What (peering into the woman's face) is thy name, pray tell?

HUMAN EASE

My name is Human Ease.

(NEHEMIAH tries to move her.)

With me 'tis well,

Why should I move? I like it here—to rest  
Is my one business,—that is ever best!

NEHEMIAH

(Laughs long and joyously. Continues to work while he laughs happily. EASE sighs, and sighs, and looks disturbed over NEHEMIAH'S laughter.)

HUMAN EASE

Why dost thou work and laugh? Why work?  
Alas!

(She rises wearily from her couch of build-

*ing material and appears much annoyed as  
NEHEMIAH continues to work and laugh.)*

I cannot live with work!

*(Brushing wearily past NEHEMIAH.)*

Knave, let me pass!

*(exit HUMAN EASE)*

*(Enter JEALOUSY. She is a deceitful looking  
woman with face wreathed in vain smiles.  
She approaches NEHEMIAH and looks  
with sinister smiles at his work.)*

JEALOUSY

Why this is Nehemiah? *(with surprise)*

Long ago

I knew thee. We were friends, dost thou  
recall

Those days in Babylon? I little knew  
That thou wouldst prove a master over all  
This mighty work!

*(Smiling with pained expression.)*

No one is more rejoiced than I am, friend,  
At all thy progress!

*(As if trying to convince herself of her joy.)*

Ah, I am so glad

Thou dost so well, my friend; and if I had  
My way, I would confer on thee all good!

I am not jealous,—all is understood  
With me. No one could wish thee more than I  
Of great success!

*(As if determined he would believe her.)*

So glad—so glad, friend! Why  
This vast success?

NEHEMIAH

*(not looking up from his work)*

I know thy voice! Thy face I have not seen!  
Thy words spell J-e-a-l-o-u-s-y. I have not  
been

Deceived by all thou say'st of my success,—  
I know full well, thou lovest me no less  
Than this work I would do. Go from me, go,  
Admiring jealousy. Thou canst not know  
The purpose of my days. Why shouldst thou  
tell

Me pleasing nothings of my work, when hell  
Is where ye wish to drag me?

*(Lifting his eyes in prayer.)*

Ah, 'tis true

"Of mine own self, I do no thing," one prays,  
In future years:

*(as if in prophesy)*

"Yea, I forever do

(JEALOUSY *with poisoned, admiring glances  
exits*)

That which the Father does;" indeed, God's  
ways

Are higher than my thoughts.

*(Raising high his hands as if he were fairly  
lifted up from the earth)*

Father, thanks, praise!



(NEHEMIAH turns again to the wall. An officious woman enters and approaches him. She wears a very anxious expression. She is IDOLATRY.)

IDOLATRY

(looking longingly at NEHEMIAH. He turns away from her with expression of annoyance and hatred. NEHEMIAH drops a tool. IDOLATRY picks it up and at the same time breaks a very valuable tool which is close at hand. NEHEMIAH angrily pushes the woman aside. IDOLATRY quickly measures a gate for him with no degree of exactness.)

I idolize thee, friend. This work ye do  
I would do for thee.

NEHEMIAH

(much annoyed—to IDOLATRY)

No! (pushing her roughly aside). Vain, vain  
Idolatry. Speak not to me again.

(NEHEMIAH continues working, but at every  
turn IDOLATRY interrupts his efforts with  
over-solicitous attention. Firmly, to NE-  
HEMIAH.)

I shall not give thee up! Thy angry pride  
At my attentions——

NEHEMIAH

(interrupting)

Go from me! (angrily). This wide

World surely furnisheth enough of space  
So that I never need to see thy face!  
I loathe thee! I despise thee, fiendish curse!  
Of all sin's leeches, none was ever worse!

IDOLATRY

*(pleased at curses, smiling)*

I idolize thee! Nothing thou canst say  
Shall ever turn my love for thee away.

NEHEMIAH

*(scornfully)*

Thy love for me! Thou hind'r'st all I do!  
Thy love for me! No word of this is true!  
Thy useless, harmful hindrances I hate!

IDOLATRY

Ah, I am used to curses. Yea, I wait  
For thy attentions——

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

*(interrupting)*

My attentions! No!

Thou shalt have none from me—thou woman,  
go!

*(IDOLATRY brings a heavy mantle and wraps it closely about NEHEMIAH so that he cannot lift his hands to his work. With great effort, he casts the cloak aside.)*

IDOLATRY

*(trying again to wrap the mantle about NEHEMIAH, who continues to cast it aside)*

Ah, it is cold, my friend, and thou shalt be

Forever blessed and comforted by me.  
I am Idolatry, close Family Tie,  
I shall not leave thee, dear, till thou shalt die.  
I am the finite love of those who fear  
For thee. I shall be ever, ever near.  
*(throwing her arms closely about NEHE-  
MIAH'S neck, she clings tenaciously to him)*  
Thee all thy life.

NEHEMIAH

*(with agonized expression, lifts his eyes to  
heaven in prayer. He does not lift a hand  
to shake the woman from him, although  
he shows in every expression his longing  
to be free from her.)*

There is one God, above,  
Father, I thank Thee that Thy law is love.  
I thank Thee, Father!

*(IDOLATRY loosens her arms from NEHEMI-  
AH'S neck. With surprise, to NEHEMIAH)*

Have I heard aright?  
Thou used to curse me, now within my sight  
Thou giv'st thanks!

NEHEMIAH

*(unconscious of IDOLATRY)*

Father of love, I thank Thee!

IDOLATRY

*(as if determined to win NEHEMIAH'S at-  
tentions. Peering into his face)*

Dear, dost thou see me, too?

Give me thy curses, love, pray do, pray do!

NEHEMIAH

*(refusing to see IDOLATRY)*

Who is so great a God as the One good?

With Him, alone, all things are understood!

IDOLATRY

*(desperately)*

Hast thou no curse to give me, dear? My life

Is nourished with vain curses, idle strife.

*(pleadingly)*

Give me abuse! Hatred my portion is

Since time began, and, ah, I feed on this!

NEHEMIAH

*(looking heavenward)*

Who is so great a God as God in heav'n?

IDOLATRY

*(beseechingly)*

I need thy curses, dear, let them be giv'n

That I may live! Idolatry, indeed,

Feasts on harsh words. Scorn is her hourly  
need.

NEHEMIAH

*(patiently, looking heavenward)*

Who is so great a God as God above,

E'en though I dwell in hell, God still is Love.

IDOLATRY

*(clinging closely to NEHEMIAH)*

Ah, I am sure thou need'st me. Dear, I know

That I must follow thee where thou wouldst  
go!

NEHEMIAH

I thank Thee, I can see but God's own ways.  
For all Life gives me, may I offer praise!

IDOLATRY

*(weeping)*

Thou praiseth me? *(sadly)* Alas! Praise  
me? Me?

NEHEMIAH

*(firmly)*

That which God gives me brings nor curse,  
nor shame.

For all God sends me, may I praise His name.

IDOLATRY

*(weeping bitterly, leaving)*

Base, cruel world, that will not grant me all  
The curses and abuse for which I call.

I crave for these! When kindness comes I go  
Back to idolatry, and hell, and woe.

*(weeping bitterly, exits)*

NEHEMIAH

*(with bowed head, as if in deep thought)*

A teacher came to earth, and said that we,  
Earth's toilers, have one God and thus are  
free;

Thou shalt have no more gods than One,  
saith he.

*(Looking up as if wondering where)*

IdOLATRY *had gone.*)

Idolatry is gone! I murmured much  
At her attentions! Ah, I loathed her touch!  
(IdOLATRY *hearing these last words, again  
steps forward to enter. Enter the five  
women, INTUITION, PATIENCE, GRATI-  
TUDE, CHARITY and WAKEFULNESS. They  
stand about NEHEMIAH.*)

(*Addressing the five women. IDOLATRY  
quickly drops back from entrance.*)

Now I can see that kindness changed to wine,  
Earth's water. God be praised! O let not  
mine

Iniquities be called to mind! In deed  
And word, let me be thankful that Love's  
creed

Is never murmuring, nor vain abuse.  
O, may I have one God, and rightly choose  
Whom I shall serve. One God is All-in-all,  
And God is Love! Father, on Thee I call  
To save me from each hind'ring thought of  
fear.

There shall be no more pain; no, nor one tear  
Of woe, as we remember God's great love  
Meets every need in earth and heav'n above.  
(*The five women smile approvingly; they  
exeunt.*)

(*A quiet woman enters and approaches NE-  
HEMIAH. She is SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

*With pious expression—to NEHEMIAH.)*

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

I am one who comes to thee, my friend,  
To tell thee I have never seen thee bend  
To evil. All these Jews, a crooked set,  
Have wrought, indeed, but now they would  
forget

The need of further toil. Just thou, just  
thou,

Art worthy! Dost thou not see?

*(NEHEMIAH listens with pleased expression)*

Now, ah, now,

Thou canst!

*(clapping her hands for joy)*

Come, then, Sanballat sends the word,  
And Geshem, and Tobiah,—they have heard  
How selflessly thou toil'st, and they would see  
Thee well rewarded for thy industry.

*(NEHEMIAH leans his arm heavily upon  
SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS' shoulder, and slowly  
walks with her to exit. His feet drag  
as if he were very weary. Not a word  
is spoken.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(low voice)*

Yes, yes, 'tis true. I toil alone, 'tis true.  
The world's great burdens fall upon a few!  
*(Just as he is about to exit with SELF-  
RIGHTEOUSNESS, NEHEMIAH slowly steps*

*back and takes his arm from her shoulder. He looks her searchingly in the face.)*

Thou hast not told thy name! Thy face is  
scarred

With many marks, as if thou long hast  
warred!

"I am doing (*slowly*) a great work (*slowly*)  
so that

I cannot come down.

*(turns toward wall)*

Why should the work cease

*(he picks up his tools and begins to measure  
the door openings)*

whilst I leave it  
and come down to you?"

(SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS *turns dejectedly and  
walks toward exit. NEHEMIAH begins  
hammering loudly at gates.*)

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

*(at exit)*

*(addressed pleadingly to NEHEMIAH, who re-  
gards her disapprovingly)*

We have been friends in days long passed  
away.

Self-Righteousness, dost thou remember,  
pray,

How kind a friend I have been unto thee?



(pleadingly)

Why dost thou, then, refuse to go with me?

(Exit SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. NEHEMIAH continues his work on the walls. HURRY comes in running. Dashes about stage, breathing excitedly. Rushes up to NEHEMIAH, and knocks over the gate which he slowly and carefully is fitting into place.)

NEHEMIAH

(looking curiously at HURRY as he is dashing madly about from one thing to another)

There is no need for hurry. Ah, I know Thy name. 'Tis hurry, worry, lack of time! There is, indeed, no reason, no, nor rhyme In thy existence. If thou wouldst not waste Thy days, remember, hurry hinders haste.

HURRY

(grabbing NEHEMIAH by the arm and pushing him around)

Ah, friend, the time is short. This wall should go

Up much more quickly! Thou art slow, so slow.

Clamp that gate into place!

(Seizes gate, it crashes from NEHEMIAH'S hand and drops down upon other clashing irons.)

Stand back, thou knave,  
Canst thou not see the hours we might save?

Quick, bring that mortar! And that trowel  
now!

*(Harsh commanding tone. NEHEMIAH does  
not obey the orders.)*

Thou fool, thou knave, why falter? Quick!

But thou

Art slow!

*(HURRY rushes about smashing everything)*

NEHEMIAH

*(calmly)*

I do not thy dictations heed. God's ways  
Are higher than thy ways. My loving praise  
Goes to the Father who now leadeth me  
Beside still waters of tranquillity.

Of all the messengers Sanballat had  
Thou art the one that make the men least  
glad,—

For thou art ignorance which never once  
Hath wrought one thing except,—to act the  
dunce.

Thou canst not curse my work, nor interfere  
With my sure progress heavenward. The  
way

Of true advancement is to wait and pray.  
The one who hastens on shall know calm  
poise,

While hurry retrogrades with deafening  
noise.

The one who acts is always gentle, still;

While hurry, doing nothing, tries to fill  
The world with the importance of its ways.  
(*Raising his eyes to heaven as if in prayer  
while HURRY rushes from the scene.*)

Father, thy active quietness, I praise!

(*A small man, PERSECUTION, carrying a whip  
of many cords, enters. He appears proud  
of himself. He glides craftily here and  
there and everywhere. NEHEMIAH, not  
observing PERSECUTION'S entrance, con-  
tinues his work. PERSECUTION wickedly  
looks at NEHEMIAH as he works and gives  
him a fearful lash with the whip on his  
back. The Cupbearer, startled, looks up  
with pained expression. Enter SELF-PITY  
and SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. They say  
nothing, but stand solicitously at NE-  
HEMIAH'S side. NEHEMIAH, taking a  
few steps, observes PERSECUTION standing  
prominently before him, and immediately  
the Cupbearer's expression of suffering  
changes to a look of vain relief.*)

NEHEMIAH

(*to PERSECUTION*)

Ah ha, I see thee now, thou gav'st the blow  
That turned me from my work! I know thy  
name,—

'Tis Persecution. Yea, I surely know

That thou hast caused me all this grief and shame!

(As NEHEMIAH weeps, PERSECUTION, stepping out into a more prominent position, appears to be most happy.)

PERSECUTION

(proudly, to NEHEMIAH)

Ah, yes, I struck the blow at thee, my friend,  
My name is Persecution; many fear  
The grief and ravages I daily send  
To those whose mission is to conquer here.

(proudly)

I struck the blow!

(strutting about as if pleased  
with himself)

NEHEMIAH

(turning sadly to his work  
—to himself)

He struck the blow! Ah, me,  
When shall I from the curse of self be free?  
(These words are said discontentedly as if  
dissatisfied with himself and the whole  
world. PERSECUTION, turning quickly,  
strikes the Cupbearer a stinging blow,  
this time over the head.)

'Twas thou,

(turning defiantly toward SELF-PITY)

self-pity, who hath done this thing!

I shall not take thy curses! Suffering

*(lashes NEHEMIAH cruelly over the head)*

Is not my portion!

*(again PERSECUTION steals up behind and lashes NEHEMIAH cruelly over the head)*

PERSECUTION

*(appearing boldly before NEHEMIAH)*

No, No, 'twas I who lashed thee,—  
My name is Persecution.

*(pleadingly)*

Call me so,  
And credit me with all I do!

NEHEMIAH

*(turns to his work. Again PERSECUTION strikes a stinging blow)*

I know  
This cruel blow came from self-righteous-  
ness!

*(Turns defiantly toward SELF-  
RIGHTEOUSNESS.)*

PERSECUTION

*(as if offended)*

Ah, no, it did not! I, to thee, profess,  
I struck the blow!

NEHEMIAH

*(to PERSECUTION)*

I scorn, indeed, each word thou sayest,  
knave!

And call thee not by name that thou wouldst  
crave.

PERSECUTION

*(eagerly)*

'Twas Persecution struck the blow, I, I,  
My name is Persecution, why, O, why  
Not credit me with all I do? Why pray?

NEHEMIAH

*(firmly)*

I scorn, indeed, each word thou sayest; nay,  
I need not thee believe! I shall not say  
Thy name.

PERSECUTION

*(angrily)*

I go! I shall not stay,—not here!  
Unless thou call'st me Persecution, Fear!  
I like my name; no other one, alas,  
Becometh me.

*(Brushing with disgust past NEHEMIAH,  
PERSECUTION takes SELF-PITY, and SELF-  
RIGHTEOUSNESS, each, by the arm, and  
leads them away.)*

Knave, traitor, let me pass!

*(PERSECUTION, SELF-PITY and SELF-RIGHT-  
EOUSNESS walk defiantly together to en-  
trance. They exeunt.)*

*(Enter ENEMY. He has almost the exact ap-  
pearance of NEHEMIAH, except his care-  
less, insincere manner. He creeps stealth-  
ily about and wickedly tries to undermine  
all of NEHEMIAH'S work. Several loud*

*reports indicate that powder explosions  
are going on.)*

NEHEMIAH

Thou cursed fool! Thou Enemy of mine,  
*(trying to push ENEMY away)*  
Why dost thou come to ruin all my days—  
Thou, hypocrite, thou traitor, coward, knave,  
I loathe thy very face!

ENEMY

Hold, sir. Pray save  
Thy curses!

NEHEMIAH

Curses?

*(as if questioning himself)*

Curses? What are they  
To drive this Enemy of mine away?  
*(looking closely at ENEMY)*

Where have I seen that face, that cruel  
smile?  
*(seizing ENEMY and shaking him vigorously)*  
I know thee now.

*(rubbing his eyes)*

Blinded was I a while  
To whom thou wert. Thou hast my very face  
With fear's contortions.

*(ENEMY makes ugly grimaces)*

*(NEHEMIAH'S hands raised as if in prayer)*

Give me strength and grace,  
Father, ever to know my enemy

Is but the fear of self mine own eyes see.

Ah, enemy,

(to ENEMY)

I truly know that thou  
Hath counterfeited me. Go! Now, now,  
Now!

(exit ENEMY)

*(Enter a shrunk, fearful man; he appears  
to be annoyed over everything. He is  
LOVE OF MONEY.)*

LOVE OF MONEY

(to NEHEMIAH)

Here, listen to me! I have much to say  
For thine own good. I have a wondrous plan  
For earning money quickly, and a man  
Like thee would do so well, so well for me!  
Come with me, I can truly make thee free.

(eagerly)

I have an income I will give to thee,  
Gold in abundance, so thou need'st not be  
Fettered by weary toil. Activity  
And thou shalt part. Until ye die, indeed,  
Thou shalt have money for each daily need.  
*(The little man walks nervously about as he  
speaks. He is constantly taking papers  
and gold from his pockets that he may  
figure up the total of his wealth. He ap-  
pears disturbed over the process, ill-at-  
ease with himself and the world.)*



There is so much to gain,—notes, bonds,  
yea, all

Of lands and houses, mortgages!

(*eagerly*)

I call

On thee to help me with this mighty work.

(*LOVE OF MONEY takes NEHEMIAH command-  
ingly by the arm as if he would lead him  
away. NEHEMIAH draws back.*)

What, wouldst thou fail me, wouldst thou  
even shirk

The duty each wouldst grasp to earn—to  
earn—?

(*LOVE OF MONEY takes quantities of gold from  
apparently inexhaustible pockets and  
heaps the treasure, alluringly, about NE-  
HEMIAH'S feet. NEHEMIAH makes as  
if he would turn away from the gold,  
but is almost unable to do so.*)

Dost thou shrink back, dost thou not yearn,  
not yearn

For this?

(*pointing to heaps of gold*)

NEHEMIAH

(*hesitatingly, addressing himself*)

This mortar, and these joists, I know

Must yet be paid for!

(*As if half reaching out for the money.*

*Darkness falls as NEHEMIAH is struggling*

*over the heap of gold.)*

To pay (*hesitatingly*) as I go,  
Is all I ask!

*(as if justifying himself)*

God knows, God knows, this gold  
Hath no attraction for me, but I hold  
It precious—just—to—meet

*(as if trying to convince himself)*

my daily need.

(DAILY HUMAN NEEDS, *come flocking in,*  
*Darkness creeps on.* NEHEMIAH *hesitat-*  
*ingly reaches out his hands to the gold.*  
*While the darkness deepens, he may be*  
*seen walking in the shadows away from*  
*the gold, and, as he walks, he prays.*  
LOVE OF MONEY *snatches up the coin and*  
*carries it to a position near the entrance.*  
*At this moment, the scene again becomes*  
*as bright as morning.)*

One comes in future years whose every deed  
Shall prove the Father's infinite supply

(LOVE OF MONEY *beckons alluringly*  
*to NEHEMIAH*)

Doth meet each hourly need; then, why  
should I

E'er falter in this work when God, alone,  
Doth pay for every joist and beam and stone?  
(NEHEMIAH *stands as if in prayer. A flock*  
*of creditors, representing, collectively,*

*Daily Human Needs, come hastening in presenting their bills for payment. Beholding LOVE OF MONEY with his heaps of gold standing at entrance, the creditors believe him to be NEHEMIAH'S steward; and, quickly depositing their bills, they snatch up LOVE OF MONEY'S money and depart, each one saying as he leaves: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money—usury of anything that is lent upon usury."*

(Deut. 23:19.)

#### LOVE OF MONEY

*(beholding that his riches have suddenly disappeared, despairingly to NEHEMIAH)*

'Twas mine, 'twas mine, 'twas mine, and now 'tis lost—

Think of the endless toil it cost, it cost!

*(Weeps bitterly while looking where his heaps of gold had been.)*

#### NEHEMIAH

*(compassionately)*

Poor love of money, thou art richer now  
Than thou hast ever been.

*(LOVE OF MONEY shakes his head.)*

Yea, now; yea, thou!

Thou, hast, indeed, no money now to love,  
Yet God hath riches that ye dream not of.

*(Going with tender compassion to LOVE OF*

MONEY *and embracing him.*)

Dear outcast, let me even call thee, friend  
Let this be thy new name, and let me lend  
Thee all I have,—a thought, a word of cheer.  
Friend, may Love bless thee on thy journeys  
here.

Robbed of the useless dross thou hadst, I see  
(*peering closely into his eyes*)

Thine eyes are bright with immortality.  
Such are thy riches, gold,—the light of youth,  
(LOVE OF MONEY *straightens up; appears*  
*youthful and happy.*)

Love in abundance, yea, the gain of Truth.  
Ah, friend, the harvests mortals daily glean  
From their earth's losses! None hath surely  
seen

More wondrous wealth than this! My  
friend, my friend,  
Thou hast lost all, and, yet, hath all to lend!  
(NEHEMIAH *and his Friend shake hands.*  
*Exit the Friend, formerly LOVE OF*  
MONEY. NEHEMIAH *steps forward—with*  
*hands outstretched.*)

Ah, World, when Love of Money comes, the  
light

Of heav'n fades, and falls the darkest night  
Of self. When Love of Money goes, the way  
Grows ever brighter till effulgent day

Of Truth hath dawned. Then, never human  
need

Shall reach us, since the Father hath, indeed,  
Met every one abundantly! Ah, World,  
For centuries thou shalt be cast, yea, hurled  
Within the maelstrom of earth's search for  
dross.

From self thou shalt be cleansed, till human  
loss

Nor gain shall mar thy journeyings. Ah,  
World,

*(as if in prophecy)*

Thou shalt have all! God's ensign, then, un-  
furled

Shall make of thee one nation, strong and  
free,

Provisioned with Truth's immortality.

## CANTICLE VIII.

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle VII. Morning scene. Over-bright sun typifying unrest. Enter twelve very small children. They quarrel incessantly among themselves. They constantly get in NEHEMI-AH'S way and howl angrily over the least provocation. Collectively they represent HUMAN BIRTH.*

DISCOVERED: *Twelve noisy children trooping in.*

### HUMAN BIRTH (First Small Child)

*(stubbing toe on building material and howling bitterly)*

Oh, my, oh, my, oh, my, my toe!

*(sitting down and holding toe in hands)*  
my toe!

*(All of the children crowd noisily about the injured one. Some of them laugh mischievously. Some of them push and crowd and knock each other over. Some whine. Some cry for fear. Some laugh loudly. The uproar is terrific as one child*

*pushes another and shrieks: "Leave me alone!" and another shouts: "Coward!" Suddenly someone throws bright colored baubles in the midst of the children. Together they roar hoarsely: "Good, good, good, good!" The baubles quickly vanish as the children reach out for them. Children all howl as baubles vanish.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(tenderly, to children)*

Where have I seen before such human woe?  
Where have I seen such poor untempered zest  
O'er life's vain baubles which but live at best  
One moment?

*(as if remembering)*

Ah, I recall, in days long gone,  
I, too, believed myself a child who grew  
As others bade me.

HUMAN BIRTH (Second Small Child)

*(accusing all the children)*

He knew, he, he knew!

HUMAN BIRTH (Third Small Child)

*(snatching something from another child)*

He took that!

HUMAN BIRTH (Fourth Small Child)

It's mine!

HUMAN BIRTH (Fifth Small Child)

I tell ye, it's mine! *(sobbing)*

HUMAN BIRTH (Sixth Small Child)

It's mine.

HUMAN BIRTH (Seventh Small Child)

I had it first!

HUMAN BIRTH (Eighth Small Child)

I did!

HUMAN BIRTH (Ninth Small Child)

He took it!

HUMAN BIRTH (Tenth Small Child)

It's mine.

HUMAN BIRTH (Eleventh Small Child)

She stole it!

HUMAN BIRTH (Twelfth Small Child)

He did! Shame! Coward!

HUMAN BIRTH (First Small Child)

*(trying to protect a child)*

Leave him alone, he's my brother.

*(Indicating child and pushing tormentor  
aside scornfully.)*

You! You!

NEHEMIAH

The words of God may now be understood.

*(beholding the quarreling of children)*

I credit not mine eyes. This is not true.

*(Raising hand as if stilling a tempest. The  
children immediately become quiet and  
listen.)*

Love knows no human birth, self's devious  
ways



Of fretfulness, and fear, and shouts of praise!  
Naught can deny that God is Father of  
All men and that He doth create through  
love!

*(Compassionately to the children.)*

Dear children, how I love thee, waifs of  
earth,

God will reveal to thee thine own new birth!  
*(as if in prophecy)*

To-day, the tribes of Israel shall come,  
Yea, twelve of them, to lead thee safely home,  
Beside still waters, where man hath not age  
Nor youth!

*(The children, as if in prayer, clasp their  
hands and look up to heaven.)*

Come, tribes of Israel, come here!

*(Enter twelve Israelites, six men and six  
women. There is a hushed silence while  
each one takes a child gently by the  
hand.)*

#### ALL THE CHILDREN

*(together)*

How glad we are! There is naught now to  
fear!

*(Each of the twelve children, led by a representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, passes by NEHEMIAH. The Cupbearer tenderly places his hand on each child as if giving a blessing.)*

NEHEMIAH

Thou shalt be safely led o'er moor and fen,  
And shouldst thou stumble thou shalt rise  
again.

*(lovingly to children)*

These Tribes of Israel shall guard and tell  
Thee how to go. Dear children, all is well!  
Truth's peace be ever with thee on thy way  
To Life, eternal, and effulgent day,  
Where man is neither old nor young—where  
he

Dwells as God's image through eternity.

*(The children and Twelve Tribes of Israel  
quietly pass from the stage.)*

*(Brightness of noon-day. Ex-  
cessive heat, denoting weariness.)*

*(Enter MATURITY, a man who appears to  
be fast growing old.)*

MATURITY

*(fearfully to NEHEMIAH)*

I fear for thee! Thou art not well, alas!  
Why shouldst thou work, my friend, thy  
youth will pass  
From thee!

*(peering into NEHEMIAH'S face)*

Or, hath it gone, indeed,—  
The while thou toilest over work's dead  
creed?

I am afraid for thee, thou troubl'st me!  
This heat is very great! Alas, my friend,  
I fear for thee—I do so long to send  
Thee to thy rest in bed of ease, to-day,  
Where thou couldst sleep earth's stupid  
hours away.

NEHEMIAH

*(scornfully)*

I know this argument, maturity—  
This cursed falsity, this cruel fear—  
This baseless nothing cannot enter here.  
Man is forever young, forever old,  
Forever childlike—God's law hath foretold!

*(Pushes MATURITY beyond exit.)*

*(Enter a dark, sinister-looking man with long, flowing robes. He carries a large black sack over his shoulder. His robes fly about as if blown by the wind. He is DISCOURAGEMENT.)*

*(Night falls. Extremely cold and desolate.)*

DISCOURAGEMENT

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

What, alone! Where are the lazy Jews to-day?

Thou workest here so long, and wherefore, pray?

Thou hast, indeed, no portion when 'tis done.

(NEHEMIAH *drops his hammer, rubs his forehead and listens.*)

I often wonder why thou shouldst do  
This useless work and slay thyself! 'Tis true  
No Jew will thank thee. Come, and rest, my  
friend.

A chariot awaits without. Just lend  
Thy time to us a while, and thou shalt be  
Repaid, indeed, for thy sincerity.  
Here no one knows.

(NEHEMIAH *sadly assents.*)

Yea, no one cares!

(NEHEMIAH *agrees*)

I see

Thou art well-nigh discouraged.

(NEHEMIAH *leans dejectedly against the wall.*)

Come with me!

(NEHEMIAH *takes a few steps toward DIS-  
COURAGEMENT and draws back.*)

I journey incognito and 'tis well—

I am of noble birth. Come, I will tell

Thee of thy portion, sleep; thy sacred right  
To take the easy way of work. Dark night  
Enfolds thee in oblivion, my friend.

(*Long arms, with flowing sleeves, held high  
over NEHEMIAH'S head.*)

Trust all to me, trust all, and I will send  
Thy soul to hell (*eagerly*) and there my par-

ent, Death,  
Will rob thee of thine all,—thy very breath!  
*(Takes from the sack thrown over his shoulder a handful of seeds, and scatters them about. As seeds fall, loud, harsh noises are heard.)*

This is my grain,—seeds of dismay. Why stand

Beside that wall in danger?

*(Fearful noises as seeds fall. NEHEMIAH, frightened, drops tools from his hands.)*

From thine hand

*(indicating tools)*

They fall! Come, let us in God's house now meet,

Within the temple. Fear would slay thee!

*(Loud reports of hail and sleet. Flashes of lightning. Stage becomes like blackest night. Evil imps, small of stature, whisk about everywhere. They tug at NEHEMIAH'S garments, bearing him almost to the ground, hang about his neck, whisper in his ear and mock him.)*

Sleet,

Hail, and lightning,—in the night they come.

*(DISCOURAGEMENT steps forward and takes NEHEMIAH'S hand as if to lead him from danger.)*

Come with me, friend, and I will lead thee  
home—

Straight to our safe abiding place in hell.  
Come with me, and my parent, Death, will  
tell

Thee of thy greatness!

(NEHEMIAH goes with him a few steps. The  
hail, thunder, and lightning cease and  
imps drop down behind heaps of building  
material. A false, convenient peace  
seems to settle down.)

NEHEMIAH

(with a start, as if awakening)

To—tell—of me—me?

DISCOURAGEMENT

(quickly as if correcting his words)

To let thee tell of all the work that thou  
Hast wrought upon these walls. Come with  
me, now!

NEHEMIAH

(drawing back)

To speak of one's own self is at a loss!  
God bears true witness here! Why should I  
cross

The barriers of hell to talk with thee  
And Death about myself? I must be free!

DISCOURAGEMENT

(still pleading)

How still it is,—so quiet now! Ah, see,

Thou may'st have peace if thou wilt come with me.

(NEHEMIAH *draws himself up to his full height, 'and towers above DISCOURAGEMENT who appears to shrivel away almost to nothing.*)

NEHEMIAH

(to DISCOURAGEMENT)

I ask, should such a man as I then flee?

(*Steps with firm strides to wall and, seizing huge gates, clamps them into place. DISCOURAGEMENT partially rises again and begins once more to scatter seeds but the sounds are very faint and soon die away. In low, weak voice DISCOURAGEMENT tries to argue with NEHEMIAH, who continues his work.*)

DISCOURAGEMENT

(to NEHEMIAH)

Come—Come—(*very faint,—hail—thunder—lightning—*)

(*very low voice*) Come—come home—

Home—(*very low*)—home—home—hell—home—

Home—home—hell—home—home.

(NEHEMIAH *rises to full height beside the nearly finished wall. One of the few last gates is clamped into place. He pays no heed to the whisperings of DISCOURAGE-*

*ment but joyously continues his task.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(to himself—proudly)*

'Tis nearly finished! *(sigh of relief)* Ah! I  
have done well,

To stand against my enemies and foes.

How well I wrought, the future ages tell,

How well I stood, the God in heaven knows!

*(As NEHEMIAH speaks of himself, one of the  
smallest and most persistent of imps  
perches on a pile of building material,  
and just as NEHEMIAH finishes these  
words, the imp tries to press a dark, green  
vial between his lips.)*

IMP

*(pressing vial to NEHEMIAH'S lips)*

Taste, taste it, friend, 'tis very, very sweet.

NEHEMIAH

*(struggling to get away)*

Why should I taste it?

*(as he speaks, the IMP quickly pours some of  
its contents down his throat?)*

IMP

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

Because 'tis truly meet

That thou shouldst know all woe.

NEHEMIAH

This *(striking vial from his mouth)* taste  
*(tasting)*, it is —



Like cursed poison!

*(As he begins to moan, DEATH enters dressed in black flowing robe; he is very old and bent.)*

DEATH

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

Did some one call? Is this  
The place where I am wanted?

NEHEMIAH

*(to DEATH)*

No one called.

No, not wanted! *(angrily)*

DEATH

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

I heard a moan, my name,  
Another name for Death; in fact, some know  
No other name for Death but uttered woe!

*(DEATH steals across the stage and takes both of NEHEMIAH'S hands. The IMPS smile wickedly at NEHEMIAH while DISCOURAGEMENT scatters seeds of discord. Loud noises, hail, thunder. Flashes of lightning. It is still very dark.)*

Thy hands are cold, my friend, just let me  
hold

Them close! They are so very, very cold.

*(NEHEMIAH shudders as if overcome with cold. Enter SIGHT, HEARING, TOUCH, TASTE, SMELL, and quietly take their*

*places at his side. They appear powerless to act.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(to the five men, as he sinks down upon a pile of building material)*

I see, and smell, and taste, and touch, and hear,

And, yet, I almost yield to cursed fear.

*(calling loudly)*

Come Intuition, Patience, Gratitude,

*(as if in a death struggle)*

Charity, Wakefulness hath understood!

*(Looking appealingly toward five men.*

*All senses change forms at once to those of women.)*

GRATITUDE

*(Kneeling down and speaking clearly into NEHEMIAH'S right ear, while DEATH continues to whine in his left ear. NEHEMIAH'S face undergoes a mighty change and struggle. The right side of his face, while GRATITUDE is speaking, seems to be freed from pain. The left side twitches nervously as if in great pain. While GRATITUDE speaks, the scene is bright and warm.)*

Thou asked for just one day of gratitude,

For vict'ry over cares, diseases, fears.

I heard thee praising God, friend, as I stood

Beside thee in thy work! A thousand years  
Of blessings daily come to one who prays  
Rejoicingly, and thanks God for His ways.  
Thou needst not fear this monster, death,  
for he

Is stupid sleep, weak inactivity.

(GRATITUDE rises and steps aside)

#### DEATH

(*whispering whiningly in NEHEMIAH'S left  
ear; scene changes to dark, cold night*)

How dark the night! I am unloved and old!  
My happiness is past! How very cold  
This place is! In the yesterdays, I had  
So many joys to make me very glad.  
I loved the past! This present hour, I *hate*!  
I want to die! Why stay here? Wherefore  
wait

For joy within the world, when joy is gone?  
While others have glad days, I mourn alone!

#### INTUITION

(*kneeling, speaks clearly into NEHEMIAH'S  
right ear. Bright light*)

Death is the myth of myths. Human despair  
And fretfulness its creed. Beset with care,  
Death's other self is age, old age, that lends  
Nor gives joys of to-day. Death's yesterday  
now sends  
It to its doom.

NEHEMIAH

(*With doubt, to INTUITION; looking fearfully  
toward DEATH.*)

Thou speak'st as if, indeed,  
Death were not someone! Why say'st: "Its  
creed

Is fretfulness?"

Is Death not someone, then?

INTUITION

(*Bright scene.*)

Death is a counterfeit. Time and again  
It comes to speak to us, as person, when  
It is not person, place, nor anything!

(*DEATH continues to whine incoherently into  
NEHEMIAH'S left ear. NEHEMIAH winces  
as if in pain. INTUITION rises and steps  
aside. The scene again becomes dark.*)

NEHEMIAH

Alas! Alas! This cruel suffering!

DEATH

(*exultingly*)

Ah me, ah me, in Babylon, my friend,  
Thou didst have joy as Cupbearer. Why lend  
Thy self to those who have no thought for  
thee?

None loves nor pities thee! None cares to  
see

Thee now! I know, for I am old, so old!  
My name is Death, Old Age. Ah, I have told

Thee mournful facts!

NEHEMIAH

*(as if weakening)*

I know! Yea, I grow old!

My happiness is past! Friends turn away!

It was not thus, alas, in former day!

Ah, these are mournful facts which Death  
hath told.

PATIENCE

*(speaking clearly in NEHEMIAH'S right ear.*

*Light.)*

Thou shalt prove faithful, friend, patient,  
and kind,

Thou shalt be grateful still to work and give!

—This is the good no man can e'er unbind,—

Thou shalt be patient that all men may live.

Thou needst not fear this monster, death.

Rise, see,

'Tis stupid sleep, weak inactivity.

DEATH

*(to NEHEMIAH*

*Night scene.)*

The ones who built with thee, thy very own,

Hath turned away from thee; and now, alone,

Thou faceth the end of all! Is there worse

Than just to have as heritage Death's curse?

Why have they turned from thee, those shift-  
less men,

To let thee die alone, unloved? Ah, when

Shall we poor mortals wake to sadly see  
We have no portion save disloyalty?

NEHEMIAH

Must we poor mortals wake to sadly see  
We have no portion save disloyalty?

Why do I mutter words Death speaks to me?  
May I not voice the Truth that sets men free?  
Why doth it seem all friends have turned  
away?

Is God not God in heav'n, eternally?  
This work of mine, could it have been for  
naught,—

Why do I speak of self, what I have wrought?

CHARITY

*(comes quietly forward and kneels close  
to NEHEMIAH*

*Bright scene.)*

To speak forever, friend, of God's great good  
Is loving charity; Well understood  
Is man's true character when God is claimed  
As his Creator,—none is cursed nor blamed.  
This work upon this wall is not of men,—  
None shall subtract nor add to it again.  
Thou needst not fear thy work shall pass  
away

—And this is Life—o'er work death hath no  
sway

(DEATH binds NEHEMIAH with heavy, cold

*chains. NEHEMIAH groans and breathes heavily.)*

*(shuddering)*

NEHEMIAH

How cold, alas, how very, very cold  
These chains are!

WAKEFULNESS

*(Light.)*

Yet they cannot ever hold  
Thee from thy work. Thou shalt arise and  
go,  
As victor over sin and fear and woe.  
Death hath no power to bind the one who,  
freed

From self, goes forth to meet another's need.  
*(NEHEMIAH continues to breathe heavily. He  
appears to be in a death struggle. DEATH  
exults over every groan.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(gaspingly)*

Self! Self! Self!

Self!—From self may I then go?

Pain! Self! Fear!

Death! Want! Woe!

DEATH

*(exultingly as NEHEMIAH'S breath becomes  
fainter)*

Ah, this is death! I saw it long ago,—  
This closing off of breath! I know! I know!

Thou saw'st my mother breathe her last and  
go;

Thy father, too, ye saw it long ago.

Ah, this is death!

It is the separation which I fear.

Thou shalt be far away from here, from here.

Thy hands are cold!

(*Holds NEHEMIAH'S hands.*)

Yea, very cold, alas.

I fear for thee. Thou know'st that I shall pass  
Death's boundaries.

NEHEMIAH

(*Rising with a struggle, gaspingly.*)

Why dost thou speak of thee

And me as ever one?

DEATH

Ah, wouldst thou see

Death's mysteries?

(*As if explainng a puzzle.*)

I would confound, confuse

Thy name with mine, so that if thou wouldst  
choose

Thine own, thou shalt, indeed, draw forth  
my name,

Fast intertwined with thine. This is Death's  
game

Of self,—a wicked prattle 'tis, indeed,

To speak thy name and mine together so.

Yea, Babylon confounded is my creed.



Thine heritage and mine are self and woe.

NEHEMIAH

(*shuddering*)

A tiny speck before my eye appears.

It blots out all the world! Death, all thy fears

Are come to pass!

(*Small black speck dances before DEATH'S and NEHEMIAH'S eyes. A dark and dreadful cloud, zigzag flashes of lightning. A dense, dark mist, spreading itself like a heavy cloud settles over all. Shrieks of women, screams of children, the shouts of men, some screaming, "O, let me die!"; some begging, "O, let me die!"; children crying, "O, why must I die!" Many hands lifted through the clouds of human warfare as if reaching out vainly for help. NEHEMIAH, with a mighty struggle, raises himself on his elbow, and beholds the death struggle of a world. The expression of his face changes quickly from intense fear to tender compassion. He reaches out both hands as if he would grasp the hands of those extended through the dark clouds and mist. NEHEMIAH, with wondrous strength, rises to his feet and lifts his eyes to heaven.*)

Self is the speck that now  
Doth dance before my sight!

I ask, canst thou

*(As if speaking to ALL.)*

Not see this speck wouldst shut out all the  
light

Of good? Father, I lift mine eyes to thee!

*(speck disappears)*

The speck of self is vanished! I am free!

I stand a freed man now! I, strong and well,  
Health, joy and peace, for *all* mankind fore-  
tell!

Is all mankind involved in Death's dire woe;  
Must they through endless night of fear then  
go?

The world, itself, is perishing, and I  
Am crushed and buried in the heap! Ah,  
why

Should they

*(with compassion)*

not rise this moment, now, and be  
Transformed from death to immortality?

*(in earnest prayer)*

God save mankind, this hour! Father, their  
need

Is more than mine! I pray, may *they* be  
freed!

*(as if in prophecy)*

The shepherds, keeping watch, shall see the  
light

Of one brave star of Love. Yea, though dark  
night

Of fear may settle o'er the world, they see  
The star of Truth's new birth that makes  
men free!

*(A bright star shines clearly down through  
the night of darkness and dispels the  
gloom. The hands reaching out for help  
vanish in the light.)*

The star that images God's wondrous might  
Of health, and holiness, and endless right.

#### DEATH

*(as if disheartened)*

Thou prayest for the world? Alas, in vain  
I wait for thee!

#### NEHEMIAH

*(to DEATH)*

Thy loss becomes earth's gain!  
Death's dream is false! *(triumphantly)* An-  
other comes to say:

"Where is thy sting?" and where, grave, is  
thy way

Of victory?

*(DEATH sinks to the floor and falls into a  
dead sleep. NEHEMIAH laughs joyously.)*

Death takes the form of sleep.

This is the one disguise that death wouldst  
keep.

(NEHEMIAH calls messengers;  
two men enter.)

Come, Messengers, and carry out this form  
Of death. Disguised as sleep, death seeks to  
harm

All men. Self, self alone! Death's very  
curse

Is finite fear of self—could there be worse?  
Death is nor person, place, nor anything—  
Its one disguise is self and suffering.

*(The messengers carry DEATH from the  
stage. NEHEMIAH turns back to his work  
on the wall. DISCOURAGEMENT creeps up  
behind him.)*

'Tis finished, as our enemies shall see.

My God, think thou upon them, those who  
cursed

Our labor! Not for once, not once, I durst  
Not think of them!

DISCOURAGEMENT

*(trying to peer into NEHEMIAH'S  
face; whispering)*

Come, we will talk of thee. Come, hell, come,  
home!

Come, let us ponder thy life's martyrdom!

NEHEMIAH

*(DISCOURAGEMENT looks about and beckons  
as if to unseen allies. All of the evil mes-  
sengers previously appearing in this*

*scene hasten in, bearing flaming vials of boiling oil and pitch. NEHEMIAH is fairly flooded with this scorching hot fluid which is poured in floods over the walls. For a time NEHEMIAH appears besmirched with a hideous coat of pitch.)*

#### DESIRE-TO-BE-ALONE

We are Desire-to-be-Alone, sin's throng  
Of evil messengers—we are pride's strong  
Desire to think of self for good or ill;  
Desire to be alone is our one will!

#### NEHEMIAH

To think of one's own self is at a loss.  
God's secret place is here! I bear no cross.  
I know thee, troops of persons, places,  
things,—

Thou art desire-to-be-alone which brings  
These barriers of hell to me and thee.  
Though multitudes are with me, I am free!  
Desire to share, desire to do and give,  
Desire to lend myself that men may live;  
This, then, is joyous rest,—home, heaven, all.  
Desire to be with men, to heed the call  
Of all mankind,—yea, each desire to be  
With others brings life, immortality.

*(As these last words are spoken, the coat of pitch which previously enveloped NEHEMIAH rolls off, leaving him with*

*cleansed, glorified countenance. Evil messengers depart.)*

(*NEHEMIAH works on undaunted, clamping the last gate into place, and hammering joyously while all of his helpers, including the daughters of SHALLUM, come thronging in. NEHEMIAH, turning suddenly, beholds DISCOURAGEMENT, who still hides behind him.*)

ALL

We come to bring thee courage, friend. We know

Thou hast withstood the battery of foe.

(*NEHEMIAH looks DISCOURAGEMENT unflinchingly in the eye—to DISCOURAGEMENT*)

Ha! After death hath fall'n, for very shame,  
Ye follow me,—discouragement,—

*(derisively)*

no name!

(*DISCOURAGEMENT trembles for fear as he sees the company which comes to encourage NEHEMIAH. When he hears his name called, he cowers back toward the exit.*)

DISCOURAGEMENT

*(shrinking away)*

The lie hath turned upon me, now I go  
Back to discouragement, and hell, and woe!

(Exit DISCOURAGEMENT, in shriveled, shrinking form. All laugh joyously as he fades away.)

NEHEMIAH

(to ALL)

This work is wrought of God. Yea, He, alone,  
Hath surely built this wall, stone upon stone.  
(The five women stand closely about him;  
a star shines brightly over all.)

## CANTICLE IX

### SABBATH REST, FOLLOWED BY EVIL'S ACCUSATIONS

DESCRIPTION: *Showing completed walls. The bright light of a Sabbath morning shines over all.*

DISCOVERED: *A vast company of men, women, and children, singing praises for the completion of the walls.*

ALL

*(singing together)*

“O give thanks unto the Lord: for He is good;  
for His mercy endureth forever.

O give thanks unto the God of gods; for His  
mercy endureth forever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords; for His  
mercy endureth forever.

To Him who alone doeth great wonders; for  
His mercy endureth forever.”

(Ps. 136:1-4.)

*(Enter NEHEMIAH with HANANI  
and HANANIAH)*

NEHEMIAH

*(to HANANI and HANANIAH)*

I give thee charge over Jerusalem,—

The while I depart to my lord, the King.



Let thy singers sing a glad anthem;  
Everyone faithful let him praise and sing:  
Glory to God on High!

HANANI  
(to NEHEMIAH)

I take thy charge.

NEHEMIAH  
(to HANANIAH)

“Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened  
until the sun be hot;  
And while they stand by,  
Let them shut the doors, and bar them:  
And appoint watches of the inhabitants of  
Jerusalem;  
Every one in his watch,  
And every one to be over against his house.”  
Thou art a captain, commanded to keep  
Watch over Israel; faint not nor sleep.

ALL  
(*intoning*)

(*addressed to EZRA, the Scribe*)

Bring the Book of the Law of Moses  
Which the Lord hath commanded to Israel.  
Bring the Book. Let its pages tell  
The words of the Law, which the Lord, our  
God  
Hath commanded to Israel.

(EZRA, the priest, brings the Book of the Law  
before the men and women; and reads

*therein before the water gate. He stands upon a pulpit of wood. Beside him stand several men.)*

EZRA

*(reading from parchment Bible)*

“Thou, even Thou, art Lord alone;  
Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of  
    heavens,  
With all their host, the earth, and all the  
    things that are therein,  
The seas, and all that is therein,  
And Thou preserveth them all;  
And the host of heaven worshippeth Thee.  
Thou are the Lord the God, who didst choose  
    Abram,  
And broughtest him forth out of Ur of the  
    Chaldees,  
And gavest him the name of Abraham;  
And didst see the affliction of our fathers  
    in Egypt,  
And heardest their cry by the Red sea;  
And shewedst signs and wonders upon  
    Pharaoh,  
And on all his servants, and on all the people  
    of his land; for Thou knewest  
That they dealt proudly against them.  
And Thou did'st divide the sea before them,  
    so  
That they went through the midst of the sea

on the dry land."

*(The people weep as the Law is read.)*

### NEHEMIAH

*(to ALL)*

This day is holy unto the Lord your God;

Mourn not, nor weep.

Mourn not, nor weep.

Go thy way *(to the people who still weep)*

—eat the fat, and drink the sweet,

And send portions unto them for whom

nothing is prepared;

For this day is holy unto our God;

Neither be ye sorry;

For the joy of the Lord is thy strength.

### THE LEVITES

*(on either side of EZRA)*

"Hold thy peace for the day is holy;

Neither be ye grieved."

*(The people who have prostrated themselves  
rise with olive branches, and pine  
branches, and myrtle branches, and palms,  
and branches of thick trees, and sing to-  
gether.)*

### ALL

*(singing together)*

This day is a day of gladness,

For we have comprehended

The words of the law which were read to us,

O Lord thy name we bless.

*(exeunt singers)*

NEHEMIAH

*(to HANANI)*

I appoint thee keeper of this wall,  
And all Jerusalem. Pray,  
Let not vain pride, nor power nor human  
sway

Cause one stone e'er to fall.

*(to ELIASHIB, a relative of TOBIAH,  
pointing to temple)*

Watch o'er yon temple wisely. Israel  
Shall be redeemed. God keep thee! All is  
well!

To-day I return to my lord, the King  
Of Babylon. Indeed, I go to bring  
Him homage, gratitude, and loyalty.

ALL

May peace and joy and health, be e'er with  
thee!

*(As the last words are spoken in farewell,  
enter two messengers from ARTAXERXES,  
the King. All exeunt save NEHEMIAH.)*

FIRST MESSENGER

*(hastily to NEHEMIAH)*

A letter to thee, Sir, thy lord, the King,  
Commissioned me to come, quickly to bring  
This message.

NEHEMIAH

*(Taking letter, reads it as if not understand-*

*ing its contents. He continues to read, as if puzzled.)*

I was going there—to-day—  
To Persia—I seek to be a king? (*reading*)

May

I be punished if 'tis true,—I seek,—I  
(*reading*) To be a king? (*puzzled*) Of what  
and wherefore? Why

Should I be king when there is One, alone,—  
The God in heaven? (*reading*) “And thou  
must well atone

For all thy vanity. I trusted thee  
And now thou, traitor-like (*reading*),  
would'st pillage me

Of mine own kingdom. Thou must surely be  
An ingrate, so Sanballat says, and he  
Hath proof whereof he speaks. I know no  
way

Save punishment to curb thy wicked sway.”

SECOND MESSENGER

(*while FIRST MESSENGER steps to NEHEMI-*  
*AH'S side and both bind him with chains*)

We take thee prisoner.

NEHEMIAH

(*to MESSENGERS*)

I was to come  
Of myself as King's Cupbearer. (*pondering*)  
My home  
Is not an earthly kingdom. God is good,

And He, indeed, hath surely understood.  
This work upon the walls, canst thou not  
see

*(pointing with chained hand to wall)*

Was truly mine own kingdom! Just to free  
Another from the curse of poverty  
And sin and fear, my friends, is all I ask  
Of earthly kingdom,—just my daily task.  
*(Exit NEHEMIAH bound with chains between  
the two messengers.)*

## CANTICLE X

DESCRIPTION: A vast underground rock  
quarry. Blinding smoke  
from the blasting. Deso-  
late, weird surroundings.

DISCOVERED: Several slaves and overseer  
silently at work crushing  
stones. They each groan  
under the desperate burden  
of the work. SANBALLAT  
and GESHEM stand at one  
side and watch the workers  
with sinister glee.

TIME: Several years later.

*(Enter NEHEMIAH. He is carrying heavy  
blasting materials. He lays down his bur-  
den and begins hewing out the largest of  
the rocks. As he works, just above him*

appears a wondrous picture of the Pyramids. NEHEMIAH glances up from his work but, at the same time, renews his blows on the rock, which yields easily. He beholds the picture just above him and smiles approvingly as he notes the unfolding of the world's history in the appearing of these massive Egyptian structures. Again NEHEMIAH glimpses the completed Temple and walls of Jerusalem. A wondrous city lies beyond. His work upon the stones is easily accomplished. Finally, a vision of the Statue of Liberty appears at the entrance to earth's Promised Land. For a brief moment, NEHEMIAH extends both hands as if in joyous greeting to the womanly traits of love and tenderness, typified in this statue which must eventually spiritualize the universe; and as he reaches out his hands, the very stones about him fall of themselves to pieces as if made ready for use without human effort. All about NEHEMIAH, the other slaves who behold no vision, are moaning bitterly over their tasks. SANBALLAT, GESHEM, and TOBIAH discern NEHEMIAH'S joy and work. Together they plan to further punish NEHEMIAH. During this scene, no word is spoken.)

## CANTICLE XI

“THERE IS NOTHING COVERED, THAT SHALL  
NOT BE REVEALED”

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle I. The Persian Court.*

DISCOVERED: KING ARTAXERXES and QUEEN  
*on throne. Royal festivities.  
A strange Cupbearer is  
serving wine.*

TIME: *Nine years later than Canticle  
VIII.*

THE KING  
(to MESSENGER)

And so Sanballat comes to us to-day?

MESSENGER  
(to KING)

Blest King, Sanballat comes, and Geshem,  
too.

THE KING  
(*observing the new Cupbearer as he goes  
about his task serving wine—to MESSEN-  
GER*)

Tell me, how is my Cupbearer of time long  
past?



MESSENGER

(to KING)

Nehemiah?

KING AND QUEEN

(eagerly, together)

Nehemiah.

MESSENGER

'Tis true to watch and pray  
And work, is all he ever seeks to do.

THE KING

Some one has said his peace and joy e'er last.

MESSENGER

'Tis very true; the hardest, roughest task  
Is not too much, indeed, for him to ask  
To do.

THE KING

Where is he working now, my son?

MESSENGER

(to KING)

He toils within thy quarries, till the sun  
Sinks low. Thou dost, blest King of Persia,  
know

That he was doomed with convict-slaves to  
give

His days to crushing stones, that he might  
live,

Or merely might exist through days of woe,—  
This was his punishment, my Lord and King.  
Because Sanballat said he sought to bring

Himself to higher power,—to rule, perchance,  
Within Jerusalem.

THE KING  
(pondering)

He has had chance  
To murmur (*thinking deeply*) Yea, I know  
that he was sent  
To toil on yonder pile of stones, till bent  
And old he should become.

(*As if arousing to new interest.*)

Does he complain?

MESSENGER  
Not at his work! He holds as richest gain  
A task that takes all courage. There are  
days  
When those who watch him toil say that he  
prays  
Unceasingly.

THE KING  
What is his prayer?

MESSENGER  
That fortified Jerusalem may stand.

THE KING  
Would he return?

MESSENGER  
Of this he does not pray. He oftentimes says  
With deepest love, that God in His own ways  
Must keep Jerusalem—shall guard it well—  
That God is King, alone.

THE KING

And does he tell  
Of his own wondrous work upon the wall?

MESSENGER

Not once. He always prays no stone may  
fall.

*(Enter SANBALLAT and GESHEM with several attendants. They all kneel before the KING and QUEEN. The KING gives them all permission to arise.)*

THE KING

*(to SANBALLAT and GESHEM)*

Governors, thy wishes?

SANBALLAT

We came to say  
The punishment thou gav'st still does not  
stay  
His joy.

THE KING

What meanest thou? Speak on.

SANBALLAT

Nine years ago, we came and told thee, King,  
Of one knave Nehemiah. We would bring  
Thee safety, King, again to-day. Ye gave  
A punishment to him, nine years ago  
Because he sought to make himself a knave  
In trying to be king. I told thee this,  
I come once more to tell thee, thou shouldst  
know

He truly seems to love the task that thou  
Hast given him for punishment, and now  
It would seem wise to change his work again,  
And give him duties that would cause him  
pain.

THE KING

*(incredulously)*

Thou sayest he loves his toil as felon slave?

GESHEM

*(to KING)*

He truly does! Ha, ha, *(scornfully)* he is a  
knave.

THE KING

*(thoughtfully)*

What shall I give him, then, to do that he  
May still be punished for disloyalty?

SANBALLAT

*(wickedly)*

It may seem strange, indeed, to thee, blest  
King,

But I have thought it would be suffering  
For him, if thou wouldst bring him unto  
thee,

Within thy court, and offer fealty  
And homage to him, give him ease and gain.  
I know him well! *(chuckling)* I'm sure, to  
him, 'twere pain

To idle festive hours away in ease.

I surely know, he would not relish these

Gay feasting days of Court life. Ah, I know  
To him it would be misery and woe.

THE KING  
(*doubtfully*)

To him it would be misery and woe?

SANBALLAT  
(*with decision*)

To him, it would be misery and woe.

THE KING  
(*to COURT MESSENGERS*)

Bring Nehemiah, and each convict slave  
Who toils on yonder pile. It is the hour  
Of day when each is coming from his work.

GESHEM  
(*delightedly*)

Ah, we shall see again that fool and knave  
Who loves his labor. King, increase thy  
power,  
And give him work that he will loathe and  
shirk,—

Give Nehemiah work that he will hate!

SANBALLAT  
(*to KING*)

'Twould be just punishment. Why longer  
wait?

(*Enter MESSENGERS and several galley slaves,  
including the overseer of the squad of  
toilers.*)

MESSENGER

(to KING)

Thy subjects, King of Persia, now are here.

(*pointing to slaves*)

OVERSEER

(*explaining to KING*)

Save Nehemiah; he had work o'er there,  
Upon yon pile of stones. He ever stays  
Long past the hours of all his working days.  
I say, "Enough's enough!" We toil all day,  
Yea, thirteen hours,—more than this time,  
I say

We cannot serve! The hours are very long  
Except for—

(*smiling tenderly with loving, parental expression as he thinks of NEHEMIAH*)

him who always works with song  
Upon his lips. For him, the day is ever very  
brief;

But for the rest of us,

(*with wave of hand he indicates the slaves about him*)

O King, our grief

Is very great!

THE KING

(*addressing the other slaves*)

My men, and what say'st thou?

MEN

*(almost moaning)*

King, for the rest of us, our misery  
Is very great.

SANBALLAT

*(eagerly)*

I told thee so, my King!  
This Nehemiah should have suffering,  
Deep suffering, and pain, and want, and woe!

GESHEM

*(to KING)*

This man who sought to be a King should  
know  
The pangs of hell. His work should day by  
day  
Be weary burden wearing life away.

THE KING

*(to MESSENGER)*

Bring Nehemiah, tell him I send word  
For him to come at once,—let this be heard.

*(exit MESSENGER hastily)*

*(to SANBALLAT and GESHEM with tone  
indicating doubt)*

I took thy oaths, my Governors, the day  
I sent him to yon stone pile. Now the way  
Grows complicated. What am I to do  
To punish him? It may, indeed, be true  
He hath not yet atoned; and, yet, I trust,  
We have judged righteous judgment. Ah,

we must  
Ask Nehemiah's God this time to tell  
Just what is right to do,—that which is well.  
(*The KING bows his head a moment, as if in  
prayer. The QUEEN, also, bows her head  
reverently. SANBALLAT and GESHEM  
shift from one foot to another, clear their  
throats, and appear annoyed.*)

SANBALLAT

(*anxiously interrupting, to KING*)  
The question is a simple one. I know  
An easy life at Court would bring him woe.  
(*enter NEHEMIAH*)

NEHEMIAH

(*he has grown older yet more radiant; he is  
dressed as a rough workman*)  
(*joyously*)

King, hast thou sent for me to come, I pray?

THE KING

(*Appears deeply moved. The QUEEN looks  
at NEHEMIAH with the tender expression  
of a mother.*)

Yea, Prince, (*pauses as if embarrassed*) I  
sent for thee—(*hesitatingly*) for thee—  
to say

That thou shalt live in ease within my sight,  
As royal Cupbearer. Thou may'st begin  
To choose thine own attendants. Bring the  
ring



And royal robe (*to attendant*).

(*Attendant brings at once a costly satin robe of many colors and places the garment tenderly in NEHEMIAH'S hands. NEHEMIAH drops the robe quickly to the ground and covers his face with his hands as if grieved.*)

Thou shalt have riches, honor, power, might.

(*NEHEMIAH picks the robe up from the floor as if fulfilling a duty. He shudders as his rough hands touch the soft satin.*)

Why speakest thou not to me? Hast thou naught

To say, thou menial slave, with ransom bought

And paid for by thy King? Wouldst thou not come

And serve as Cupbearer within my home  
And court?

NEHEMIAH

(*to KING while he looks longingly toward the OVERSEER*)

King, there is much to do, as he (*indicating OVERSEER*) can tell.

I should not leave my work. 'Twould not be well

With thee (*to OVERSEER*) and all thy men  
(*turning to slaves*)

(*NEHEMIAH, still holding the costly robe,*

*stands among the toilers. Unthinkingly,  
he begins stroking the soft satin garment.  
His hands, rough with toil, catch harshly  
on the soft satin. He shudders. To KING.)*

Blest King, my very hands are hardened now  
To toil,—to roughest work. Why should I  
cease

My labors? There are those to serve, I vow,  
Much fitter, in this Court. Pray, call on  
these,

And let me go. Blest King, (*pleadingly*)  
they're needing me,  
These men (*indicating slaves*) are not so  
strong as I.

Ah, see

My brawny arms! (*bares his muscular arms*)

THE OVERSEER

(*to KING*)

My King, one word,

When he (*indicating NEHEMIAH*) first came  
to me, I, too, had heard

How he had sought to be a king o'er there,  
Within Jerusalem. I took great care  
To make his punishment full hard, O King.  
I heaped upon him curses! Suffering  
Became his daily portion! Yea, I know  
He had full measure in his meed of woe.  
I hated him! And why?—I cannot tell,—  
I longed to see him suffer pangs of hell.

QUEEN AND KING

*(eagerly, as if suffering)*

And did he suffer?

OVERSEER

At first, there were days

When all his stones seemed mountains.

Bitter ways,

My King, belong unto the felon-slave.

Well doth he pay for all the hours he gave

To sin.

THE KING

*(to OVERSEER)*

And this man *(indicating NEHEMIAH)*, did  
he murmur much?

OVERSEER

*(to KING)*

Ah, no, my King, I never have seen such

As he! With every stone he toiled to break,

It fairly seemed, he did arise, awake,

To higher things! My King, I cannot lend

Him even unto thee—he is our friend!

*(the OVERSEER and slaves crowd lovingly  
about NEHEMIAH)*

*(Startled)* Ah, what have I said? Shall I be  
punished more?

I told the truth but did not think before

I spoke!

KING

*(to all—with firmness)*

But I have spoken, and my word  
Is first and last our law,—it must be heard!

SANBALLAT)

(*laughing wickedly*,—to GESHEM)

His (*indicating Nehemiah*) happy days, I  
know, are truly past,

We have accomplished all we wish at last!

KING

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

Speak up, and tell me—what hast thou to  
say

About thy work?

NEHEMIAH

(*to KING*)

My King, just now, the way  
Is very bright for me, upon yon pile  
Of stones; if I might work there for a while  
(*pleadingly*)

I know that I might help these men (*indicating slaves*). I stand

Ready to serve, my King (*pleadingly*). We  
have had good

Days yonder! (*As if pointing to stone pile.*)

If one only understood! (*earnestly*)

(*Regretfully*) If I should—come—(*slowly*)  
—to thee— I know—that—I—

Can do no more than come, alas, and try  
To serve thee well. (*As if convincing himself of a duty.*)

KING

Hast thou forgotten, pray  
Doth memory recall that long past day  
Thou wrought upon the towering walls that  
stand  
About Jerusalem?

NEHEMIAH

*(joyously)*

Ah, King, my hand  
Still builds those walls.

KING

*(startled)*

Thy hand still builds those walls?

NEHEMIAH

*(to KING)*

Ah, yes, blest King, and not a stone e'er falls.  
Each rock I crush o'er there, it is, indeed,  
For these redeemed captives. Yea, their  
need

Is yet my prayer, O King.

KING

*(eagerly)*

And wouldst thou go  
To view those walls again? Speak, let me  
know!

*(Leans forward eagerly. NEHEMIAH kneels  
at feet of KING.)*

SANBALLAT AND GESHEM

*(afraid)*

King, why speakest thou so? Art thou, then,  
mad?

This is his wish to go,—his prayer, ah, had—  
We our own way—

KING

*(interrupting, firmly)*

Hold, fools! I listened once  
To all thou hadst to say. I, too, was dunce  
And knave, indeed, to heed thy foolish lies!  
This man, *(bending forward, as he tenderly  
places his hand on NEHEMIAH'S bowed  
head)* is Prince, indeed; yea, he may rise  
And go again to view those walls. His creed  
Of kingship is to meet each human need  
With love. He truly was a king o'er there,  
E'en at Jerusalem, and monarch where  
Those felon-slaves were toiling day by day.  
To be a king is just to watch and pray!  
I see it now, yea, all is very plain;  
He seeks no earthly kingship. No, nor gain  
Is there for him in title when he knows  
The joy of daily work where'er he goes.  
*(Summons messengers and whispers direc-  
tions. They chain SANBALLAT and GE-  
SHEM together. They are roughly dragged  
from the stage.)*

*(To SANBALLAT and GESHEM)*

Go forth from me! Thy faces nevermore  
Shall look on mine! Go forth, the open door

Of hades waits for every cursed lie  
That would besmirch true manhood. They  
shall die,—

These falsehoods, every one, but man is free,  
Born of one true Creator, God, is he!

Such is the teaching of his ministry; (*indicating* NEHEMIAH.)

Thou shalt be punished. All that thou hast  
said,

Each idle word thou uttered stand'st as curse  
Of wrong before thee. Yea, thou shalt be fed  
By jealousy. Ah, could'st thou suffer worse?  
(SANBALLAT and GESHEM with heads bowed  
in shame depart. They are bound between  
two messengers.)

(To NEHEMIAH, waving him permission to  
arise.)

To-morrow, thou and I, and all these men,  
(*indicating slaves*)

With our blest Queen, and Court, shall go  
again

To see Jerusalem.

NEHEMIAH

(to KING)

(*gratefully*)

Blest King, our gain  
Shall be to find those walls still strongly  
stand,—

This is our kingdom, Sire.

KING  
(to NEHEMIAH)

I pledge my hand  
That I regret those long and bitter days  
That thou hast toiled on pile of stones. The  
ways  
Of blind revenge are hard, indeed, to bear.  
(Weeps.)

NEHEMIAH

My King, I pray thee, do not have a care  
For those days; they were sweet, indeed, to  
me,—

Those blessed hours I knew that I might be  
A friend to all I wrought with. Even, then,  
As slaves condemned, we still were friends  
and—men.

Jerusalem! (*Extending his arms as if to an  
invisible City.*) I see thy walls again,  
Rising about me. Father, (*eyes raised to  
heaven*) I am blest

With all thine hand hath given me! I pray  
To thank Thee ever on my homeward way.  
Jerusalem, I saw thy walls arise  
Above yon pile of stones! King, my surprise  
Was very great when I, awake, didst see  
The heavenly city come to set me free  
From all my weary toil and suffering!  
Ah, thou shalt see Jerusalem, my King!  
The new Jerusalem, with walls built high,—



High unto heaven that he who passeth by  
May see the captive now is safe, indeed,  
Within the city, coming down from heaven,  
The city, founded peaceably, and given  
To Love and Life and joy and work; yea,  
these

Are its foundation stones. The God of peace  
Hath built Jerusalem! And, over all,  
The Father watcheth tenderly! The wall  
Of his protecting love stands strong and true  
About the remnant! Israel's captive Jew  
Hath been redeemed! He is not bond, nor  
free,

Nor male, nor female, Jew, nor Greek is he!  
Messiah's hope shall free! Ah, we shall see  
(*to all, as if prophesying*)

Jerusalem! Father, thanks be to Thee.

## CANTICLE XII.

CASTING OUT SELFISHNESS, LETHARGY, AND  
IDOLATRY. SALVATION.

DESCRIPTION: *Same as Canticle VIII.*

DISCOVERED: *All the people gathered before  
the walls at mid-day.*

TIME: *Ten days later.*

ALL

*(intoning)*

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness  
thereof;

The world. and they that dwell therein.

For he hath founded it upon the seas,

And established it upon the floods.

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?

And who shall stand in his holy place?

He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;

Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity,

And hath not sworn deceitfully.

He shall receive a blessing from the Lord,

And righteousness from the God of his sal-  
vation.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;

And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors:

And the King of glory will come in.

Who is the King of glory?

The Lord strong and mighty,

The Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;

Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors:  
And the King of glory shall come in.  
Who is the King of glory?  
The Lord of hosts,  
He is the King of glory." (Psalm 24.)

EZRA

*(Reading, before the people, from Isaiah  
52:1.)*

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion;  
put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem,  
the holy city; for henceforth there shall no  
more come into thee the uncircumcised and  
the unclean."

*(Closes the book, and turning, looks intently  
at the temple. All the people look toward  
the temple. ELIASHIB is seen running up  
and down the steps of the temple carry-  
ing armsful of TOBIAH'S personal belong-  
ings, such as robes, caps, shoes, etc. Some  
of these belongings he occasionally drops,  
and they are carelessly strewn about the  
temple steps. )*

*(Turning about and addressing the people.)*  
Our friend, Cupbearer of the King, returns  
to-day.

ALL

*(shouting gladly)*

Ah ha, he comes—he comes—the way  
Of peace is Nehemiah's.

(ELIASHIB is busied in the door of the temple with his own personal work.)

EZRA

(disapprovingly to ELIASHIB)

A good word

Hast thou to say to him?

ELIASHIB

(carelessly to EZRA)

Yea, I have wrought

Within this temple, just as he has taught.

EZRA

(to ELIASHIB)

For thyself, alone, hast wrought?

ELIASHIB

(to EZRA)

At times, 'tis true.

All work may not be given for Greek and Jew.

(HANANI and HANANIAH are sleeping soundly at one end of the porch of the temple. SLEEP, in dull colors, is watching jealously over them.)

EZRA

(pointing derisively toward the sleepers)

Yet they were truly left in charge! Yon temple wall

They have not guarded. Sleep on, should they fall,

Would they awake? (The sleepers, breath-

*ing heavily, move, in their sleep, over  
very near the edge of the porch.) Ah,  
lethargy, I know*

Of none more deadly enemy and foe! (*point-  
ing toward sleepers*)

Nor home, nor church thou guardest when  
with sleep

Thine eyes are heavy. A still small voice  
will come,

And sadly say: "Couldst thou not watch  
one hour,

And keep a loving guard o'er church and  
home?"

*(A loud blare of trumpets is heard without.  
Enter chariots and drivers, Court attend-  
ants, KING ARTAXERXES and QUEEN, for-  
mer slaves dressed as nobles. NEHEMIAH  
enters last, accompanied by the five beau-  
tiful women, INTUITION, GRATITUDE, PA-  
TIENCE, CHARITY, and WAKEFULNESS.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(to All)*

Greeting, my friends. *(All bow reverently.)*

The walls *(examining walls carefully)* still  
stand, I see.

I thank thee for thy true fidelity! *(Again  
bows to all.)*

*(At this moment, ELIASHIB emerges from  
the temple, carrying softest of down pil-*

*lows, images, robes, and many personal belongings. NEHEMIAH discerns this proceeding, and bounding up the steps of the temple, seizes ELIASHIB, and shakes him energetically).*

So thou (*scornfully*)

Hast prepared for *thee* a great chamber,  
Where aforetime our fathers laid their meat  
offerings,

The frankincense, and the vessels, and the  
tithes of the corn,

The new wine and the oil, which was com-  
manded to be given to the Levites, and  
the singers, and the porters;

And the offerings of the priests?

(*turning to the KING*)

Artaxerxes, king of Babylon,

Thou bearest witness, in all this time,

I was not at Jerusalem.

THE KING

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

I bear witness, Nehemiah, my Cupbearer.

NEHEMIAH

(*to QUEEN*)

O, thou noble Queen of Babylon,

Thou bearest witness, in all this time,

I was not at Jerusalem.

QUEEN

(*to NEHEMIAH*)

I bear witness, Nehemiah, King's Cupbearer.

NEHEMIAH

*(to Court)*

Worthy Court of Artaxerxes Longimanus,  
and the Queen of Babylon,  
Thou bearest witness, in all this time,  
I was not at Jerusalem.

THE COURT

*(together)*

We bear witness with our King and Queen.

NEHEMIAH

*(sadly)*

To-day I have found the temple profaned;  
They have entered as thieves in God's sight.  
*(TOBIAH, hearing the conversation without,  
comes to the door of the temple, and  
yawns as if awakened from a long sleep.)*

For themselves

*(Pointing derisively to ELIASHIB and  
TOBIAH.)*

they have wrought, but naught have  
they gained

For God is the Lord of right.

For themselves they have wrought, but  
naught have they gained,

For our God is the Lord of right.

*(NEHEMIAH enters the temple, and return-  
ing again to the door, casts out, far be-  
yond the wall, the household stuff of ELI-*

ASHIB and TOBIAH. *Both men steal to one side of the stage.* NEHEMIAH *commands servants to come with water for cleansing. During this process, the singers flee from the stage, every one returning to his own field.)*

*(to the KING)*

I perceive that the portions of the Levites  
Have not been given them. *(Looking about where the singers stood.)*

For the Levites and the singers that did the  
work

Are fled every one to his field.

*(Addressing the rulers, and pointing toward the empty temple.)*

Why is the house of God forsaken?

*(Bows his head and weeps.)*

RULERS

*(nonplussed)*

Why is the house of God forsaken?

NEHEMIAH

*(to rulers)*

Is it not that they who would own this sacred  
place *(points derisively to ELIASHIB and TOBIAH who are seeking to hide)*

Have driven those who work without, and  
they

Would own outright all goodness and all  
grace,



As if they could be purchased? Let them  
pay

The price of sorrow!

*(Drives ELIASHIB and TOBIAH away. They  
leave sorrowfully, carrying quantities of  
personal belongings.)*

RULERS

*(repeating with emphasis)*

Let them pay

The price of sorrow!

NEHEMIAH

*(Observing HANANI and HANANIAH, sleep-  
ing, while SLEEP watchfully guards them.)*

Why is mankind so loath to keep awake?

Is God not good to think of? Why, then,  
sleep

Away one's precious hours? Arise, and shake

*(goes to edge of porch and gives men  
vigorous shaking)*

This cursed lethargy aside. Yea, keep

The faith, and thou shalt richly bless, indeed,

All men, if wakefulness be thy one creed.

*(Both men wake. Exit SLEEP very quietly.)*

*(to MESSENGER)*

Call all Judah, *(gladly)* let them bring

The tithe of corn and new wine,

And oil to fill our empty treasuries;

Let them gather the fruit from the field and  
vine,

That our God in heaven we please!

*(Exit MESSENGER.)*

(NEHEMIAH singles out SHEMAIAH, the priest, ZADOK, the Scribe, and PEDAI AH of the Levites, and HANAN, and summons them about him.)

Thou hast been faithful, for thou  
Hast distributed unto thy brethren.

*(Enter men and women and children. They are all carrying baskets of corn and wine and oil.)*

ALL

We come, blest Nehemiah, here to-day  
To praise the King of kings and watch and pray.

*(Enter men with ware, selling fish. They go directly to the nobles and give them their earnings.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(to the Nobles)*

“What evil thing is this that ye do,  
And profane the Sabbath day?”

*(Nobles quickly cast coins to the ground. Darkness seems to creep on suddenly, as if a storm were rising. The gates are open. NEHEMIAH gives orders that they shall be closed.)*

Let all the gates be shut this night,  
And opened not till after the Sabbath day.

ALL  
(together)

Let all the gates be shut!

*(The iron gates swing forcefully shut, and as they close the setting sun shines forth with wondrous splendor.)*

NEHEMIAH

*(firmly to those who sell fish)*

Why lodg'st thou about the wall? What right  
Hast thou to profane the Sabbath day?

There remaineth a rest, a Sabbath rest,  
A quiet hour of meekness truly blest

When we work for God alone.

*(The fishmongers cast their baskets aside and earnestly listen to NEHEMIAH.)*

*(Enter several young men talking to young women of foreign birth. The women have low, degraded appearance. They are all intoxicated. Loud, coarse jesting and vulgar caressing.)*

THE YOUNG MEN

*(to NEHEMIAH)*

Nehemiah, *(laughing boisterously)* our  
wives of foreign birth!

NEHEMIAH

*(sadly)*

And thou, now *(to several)*

Wouldst wed strange wives? *(To another young man)* and thou *(to another)* and

thou?

Strange fancies have we when we seek our  
own,

And not another's good. None can atone  
For wrong; forever it is cast without,  
With "dogs, and sorcerers," with creeds and  
doubts!

Strange wives, strange creeds, strange gods,  
strange idle prayers,

Strange deprivations, strange diseases,  
cares!

*(The women of strange birth slip quietly  
from the stage. The daughters of SHAL-  
LUM silently take their places. The peo-  
ple with baskets of corn and wine and oil  
on their arms sing together.)*

ALL

*(The people walk in groups on the tower-  
ing heights of the walls. See J. James  
Tissot's Bible illustration, "The Proces-  
sion on the Walls of Jerusalem," p. 544.  
They read as they walk. Each one holds  
two books of the Law, one in the right  
hand and one in the left. The last rays  
of the setting sun shine softly over the  
procession of singers.)*

*(Singing together.)*

"Create in me a clean heart, O God;  
And renew a right spirit within me.

Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;  
And uphold me with a willing spirit.  
Thou delightest not in sacrifice;  
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offerings.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou  
wilt not despise.

Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion:  
Built Thou the walls of Jerusalem.  
Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem."

#### NEHEMIAH

*(hands uplifted to heaven—to the men and  
women on the heights of the walls)*

"Remember me, O my God, concerning this,  
And wipe not out my good deeds that I have  
done

For the house of my God, and for the offices  
thereof—

Remember me, O my God, for good."

For I, as the King's Cupbearer,

Bring peace and joy to earth.

Yea, I, as the King's Cupbearer,

Herald mankind's new birth.

I prophesy peace, salvation.

Jerusalem, saved, begins

To mould the world in one nation

And cleanse earth's temple of sins—

Sins that have stirred through malice

Earth's nations to war and hate.

Jerusalem holds the chalice  
Of love at her heavenly gate.  
Within Jerusalem, all men shall be  
Both male and female, sinless, deathless, free.  
*(The five beautiful women standing on the  
highest point of the walls look tenderly  
down to NEHEMIAH. They typify col-  
lectively that which, according to the Sha-  
vian quotation previously given, repre-  
sents an "eternal womanly principle in  
the universe." As these women walk  
upon the walls, they are intently reading  
two books of the Law which they hold  
aloft in either hand before them. Bril-  
liant rays of the setting sun light up  
the pages of the open books.)*

"Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O  
Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is builded as a city that is com-  
pact together;

Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the  
Lord,

Unto the testimony of Israel,

To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:

They shall prosper that love thee."

(Psalm 122.)

THE END.



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GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

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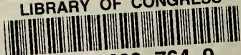








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